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TO PRESIDENT HOOVER'S APPEAL for nation-wide support for the drive for funds to care for the unemployed victims of our acquisitive economic system, we hope all the readers of *The Nation* will respond, even though they should feel, as we do, that the government is shirking its solemn duty in not assuming this responsibility. Mr. Hoover is of course correct, despite his "sob-stuff" rhetoric, in declaring that "no one with a spark of human sympathy can contemplate unmoved the possibilities of suffering . . ." in the coming winter. People are already dying of under-nourishment, which means starvation, in all our large cities. Everywhere the depression has reduced men and women to despair, wiped out their savings, and deprived them of all hope for the future. Not to give "until it hurts" under these circumstances would be to show oneself callous indeed. That the dole will come if the depression lasts another two years is certain. Meanwhile, however, private benevolence will do its best; though the well-to-do and the rich are themselves hard hit by the depression it ought to be possible to raise the sums asked—only $12,000,000 in New York City. Whether this sum will be large enough, in addition to the amounts voted by the municipality and the State, to care adequately for the 750,000 men and women in the metropolis now officially reported unemployed remains to be seen.

WHEN THE FINANCIAL HISTORY of the present time comes to be written, our children will surely read with incredulity that in 1931, when the United States had in its vaults $5,000,000,000 of gold—nearly half the world supply—foreign holders of credit began withdrawing gold in the fear that we were going to abandon the gold basis! It is a situation to which only the author of "Alice in Wonderland" could really do justice, and the most striking illustration we have so far had of the unreasoning hysteria which has seized the world. Panic, of course, always tends to create the very event it fears: it has done so for Germany and England, and it is no doubt England's present desertion of the gold standard that has caused many people now to think that nothing is too incredible or ridiculous to be believed. Less than four weeks after England's suspension of the gold standard, it is true, the Federal Reserve system has lost $650,000,000 in gold, a loss which breaks all records for so short a period; the largest previous export of gold in any month was $100,000,000 in June, 1928. But even with the present loss, our gold supply is still as great as it was in the spring of 1929, when the chief concern of European and American economists was how our unparalleled holdings could be better distributed. Though the system's reserve ratio has fallen in the last four weeks from 78 per cent to 62 per cent, the latter ratio is still ample. Moreover, it would be higher than it is were it not for an increase in note circulation in the same period of $605,000,000, an increase made necessary at least in part by the hoarding of paper money by our own hysterical citizens.

UNDER OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES the flow of gold back to Europe would be an event to be greeted with real satisfaction. While we may still view the outflow calmly, there are several considerations which greatly reduce the satisfaction that might otherwise be felt. One is the very rapid rate of the withdrawal, which may prove slightly unsettling. Another is the fact that the gold is being withdrawn because of senseless panic, not because of basic changes in the flow of international trade. A third is that 80 per cent of the gold has been going, not to England or Germany, where it would prove most helpful, but to the one other country in the world that does not need it—France. So far as our own position goes, it is quite clear that the Federal Reserve banks can offer gold without endangering their reserves far longer than foreigners will have the credit balances to enable them to pay for the gold. Meanwhile, one hardly knows whether the innuendoes reflecting on the dollar's safety that have been appearing recently in a large number of French newspapers are more to be condemned for their absurdity or for their unscrupulousness. It would be illuminating to know not only who is inspiring them, but for what purpose.

THE UNPREDICTABLE British election, which takes place on October 27, ranges from free-for-all fights during the speeches of Sir Oswald Mosley, in which the candidate was hit by a chair in a Birmingham meeting and

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was provided, against his will, with a police escort, to meeting after meeting at which the deadly apathy of the British voter is the only thing to be noted. Even the Seaham district, in which Prime Minister MacDonald is trying to preserve his seat against the protests of his former Labor friends, can get up only sporadic enthusiasm or heckling. There have been a few meetings when even Mr. MacDonald's charm and forceful oratory were not able to overcome the protests of the audience. It must have been bitter for him, who was, as he said, Labor at his birth, and would be "Labor till I die," to hear the miners who sent him to Parliament last time by a huge majority shout him into silence and call him names among which "Traitor!" was not the least. J. H. Thomas, too, is coming in for his share of abuse. When he attempted to speak in behalf of Derwent Hall Caine in Liverpool he was greeted with shouts of "Twister!" and was assured that "we are not going to starve in silence!" The London City, that barometer of national attitudes, is betting heavy odds that the Conservatives will come in with a handsome majority. One cannot be sure; if the voters are in the main apathetic, it is not safe to predict that their apathy necessarily means Tory votes. Yet it is undeniable that the Labor Party is divided in counsel and lacking in decisive campaign leadership. The press, of course, is almost unanimous in support of the National Government.

THE PATRIOTS have found a new argument against disarmament: we must be prepared to defend ourselves from the Terrible Turk! Apparently hoping to start a back-fire to the success which the Peace Caravan of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom has had, the National Civic Federation is circulating a disarmament questionnaire to ascertain the "real" state of the public mind on this question. In a letter accompanying the questionnaire, Matthew Woll, acting president of the federation, calls attention to the "spectacular" Peace Caravan. He goes on to suggest that the many governors and mayors who signed the petition of the Women's International League were not quite aware of what they were doing. Why? Seemingly because the petition was the work of an ultra-pacifist organization which, with the Socialists and Communists, wants complete disarmament, whereas "all normal-minded Americans" favor limitation, which is "a very different proposition." But even limitation must be limited, according to Acting President Woll, for "many advocates of limitation insist upon certain safeguards—particularly that our country and the other civilized nations, through neglect to provide adequate means of defense, shall not place themselves in a position where they can be overrun by the red armies of Soviet Russia *and the hordes of Islam.*" It is no wonder that, as Mr. Woll points out, there is "such great confusion" on the question of disarmament.

PUBLIC COMPETITION with private enterprise in the utilities field may be urged by the Progressives in Congress as a solution of the utilities regulation and transportation problems. This course has been recommended by the committee of experts chosen at the Progressive Conference in Washington last spring to study these questions. "The federal and State governments," the committee said in its report to Senator Norris, chairman of the conference, "should cooperate in establishing enterprises for the production and distribution of electric power wherever feasible, and thereby create standards of service and of rates which can be applied in regulation of privately owned and operated electrical utilities." An experiment along these lines is already being tried under Governor La Follette in Wisconsin. In the case of the railroads, the committee said: "The federal government has the power to construct or to take over public highways. This power should be exercised to establish a government railway system, supplementary to and competitive with the privately owned railroads," again with a view to establishing "standards of service and of rates" to be "applied in the regulation of private enterprises." Proponents of private enterprise could not ask for a fairer deal than this. We believe that public competition is the most practical and workable solution of these problems. Moreover, we are morally certain that unless a definite solution, either this or some other that will fully protect the public interest, is soon found, it will not be long before private enterprise in the utilities field is wiped out.

ALFRED EMANUEL SMITH, ex-Governor of New York, and the last candidate of the Democratic Party for the Presidency, dealt himself a deadly blow in New York on October 10, when he attended the great campaign rally of Tammany Hall. This was the Al Smith who once impressed upon the country the idea that there was a new Tammany. This was the Al Smith whom men of all faiths had come to respect as one who had worked his way up through Tammany Hall but had kept himself and his ideals clean. Yet there he was on the platform with the most brazen Mayor New York has ever had, joining with the "boys" in glorifying the Hall and the administration under which the city is being exploited as never before. The very week in which this meeting was held was the week in which it came out that Under-Sheriff Peter J. Curry on a salary of $7,500 a year had banked the sum of $622,311 between 1925 and 1931, thus nearly doubling the sums banked by Sheriff Thomas M. Farley during the same period—$360,600. If Mr. Smith had read the papers he must also have known that the Kings County (Brooklyn) Register banked $510,000. For months revelations like these have been in the daily press as a result of the Seabury inquiry. Al Smith found nothing to deplore, nothing to regret. Instead, he gave a sweeping indorsement to all the candidates of Tammany Hall, whose appointees have thus grown rich while in public service. The new Tammany? There is no such animal. It is now what it always has been—a gigantic conspiracy to govern New York for the benefit of the pockets of the insiders of Tammany Hall and their friends.

GERMANY WILL GO into the coming winter, one that may prove the most difficult it has experienced since 1919, with Heinrich Brüning still at the head of the government. The vote of the Reichstag sustaining the chancellor was not a vote for continued republican rule as against a possible fascist dictatorship—Brüning has himself assumed virtual dictatorial control, though it may be hoped that this is only for the period of the economic emergency. Rather did the vote represent an unavoidable choice between a dictatorship of the moderates and possible civil warfare, for it is almost certain that victory for the right opposition would have been the signal for an outburst of violence

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from the Communists, if not also from the Socialists. The fascists and their Nationalist colleagues walked out of the Reichstag chamber when they saw their plan to unsaddle Brüning had failed. Their theatrical gesture, however, was not without value. During their absence the Communists rushed through a resolution, supported by the Social Democrats, under which the next instalment for the construction of armored cruiser "B," amounting to about $2,500,000, would be devoted to feeding children of the unemployed. The government and the middle parties, being in the minority, were unable to block the resolution and it was legally approved. Thus Germany's unemployed were served in an unexpected but handsome manner by the "patriotic" fascists.

ONCE MORE GERMANY'S foreign-trade figures are outwardly reassuring. In September the excess of exports over imports amounted to $92,000,000, the largest export surplus that Germany has achieved in any month since the war, exceeding by $9,000,000 even that of August, which itself had established a record. For the first nine months of the present year the export surplus has amounted to $457,000,000. It must not be overlooked, however, that this so-called "favorable balance of trade" is not so much something that Germany has achieved as something that has been forced upon her. It is significant that the German balance of trade has been "favorable" since the latter part of 1929; but it was then, immediately after the New York stock-market collapse, that American bankers and investors stopped lending to Germany on a large scale. It was possible for Germany to have an excess of imports, even while she was making reparations payments to France, only because she was borrowing on long and short term from England and America. The panic this summer brought the possibility of securing such credit to an end. It is now virtually impossible, therefore, for Germany to have an import surplus, if only because there is no credit available for such a surplus. It remains to be seen how long the present export excess, secured through drastic economies in consumption and mainly the result, not of an increase in exports, but of a falling off in imports, can be maintained.

BOTH THE CORTES and the church authorities in Spain are to be congratulated on their tactful handling of the religious problem. When the Cortes voted to separate church and state it did not go to the extreme many observers had anticipated and vote to abolish all religious orders, although it did leave open the question of possible confiscation of their property in the future. On the other hand, the Papal Nuncio in Madrid refused to become alarmed when the Cortes took the action everyone had looked for. He informed the government that "the church feels wounded, but not hostile to the republic," and told the press that he hoped there would be no rupture between the Vatican and Spain, for in that case he feared there would be a much more radical program adopted. President Zamora resigned because he thought the Cortes had gone too far, but even he took a strong stand against any hostile reaction on the part of the Catholics which might threaten the stability of the republic. There must be no thought, he warned, "of following the path of monarchical reaction or dictatorial madness." There have been inevitable disorders as a result of the Cortes vote, the Catholic deputies from the Basque country have threatened to withdraw from the parliament, and a rumor has been spread of a possible religious war in the Basque provinces. But it is generally believed that Manual Azana, the new President, will be able to control the situation.

POLITICAL UNREST in quarters as yet undefined has been ascribed as the immediate cause of the government crisis in Mexico. But whatever the immediate reasons for the sudden Cabinet changes, the crisis was not entirely unexpected. Economically Mexico has been suffering as much as the rest of the world. The treasury has been struggling with an unbalanced budget, with revenues decreasing at an alarming rate. So serious had the situation become by early August that the government felt compelled to shift the national currency to a silver basis, but this served neither to check the increasing deficit nor to improve the general economic situation. Apart from economic troubles, Mexico has had to contend with political and social dissatisfaction. The revolutionary program has been all but forgotten, as was ably shown by Blas Urrea (Luis Cabrera) in *The Nation* of December 31, 1930. The government's quarrel with the church continues. A symptom of the resultant unrest was the pistol battle on the floor of the Chamber of Deputies on August 25, in the course of which one member was slain and two others wounded. The crisis has brought Plutarco Calles to the Ministry of War. Thus the former President now virtually controls both the army and the country's financial system, having a few months ago assumed direction of the Bank of Mexico at the invitation of the government and leading financiers.

YALE UNIVERSITY, much to its probable discomfiture, has hatched another crop of mosquitoes to edit again the *Harkness Hoot*. These young pests hover over Yale's precious architecture, thumb their noses at its partially Gothic elegance, refuse to be in any way cowed by the Harkness millions, and take an unholy delight in the inconsistencies they see taking shape about them—particularly in the Gothic exterior of Pierson-Davenport College and its Georgian inner court. They helpfully offer as their own proposed Yale building a drawing of a very prettily designed small church of American colonial architecture topped with a large, ornate Gothic tower, as if the Woolworth Building had ambled down Broadway and climbed up on the top of St. Paul's Chapel. It is possible that the Yale powers-that-be will find these criticisms merely annoying. An article in the magazine, however, Sober Advice to Freshmen, by one of the editors, Richard S. Childs, should, if they retain any powers of self-criticism, fill them with shame. Mr. Childs has drawn for them a picture of Yale as he sees it, the place where gentlemen are manufactured and scholars are laughed at, a shallow, self-seeking, trivial, insincere playground for young bond salesmen to make contacts in before they take up the serious business of life. This may or not be a just picture. But that a thoughtful young man, as Mr. Childs reveals himself to be, one who is already well on the way to education and who possesses an enviable command of the English language, should see the university in this light shows that something is wrong with Yale which House Plans will not remedy. This is not the buzz of an undergraduate mosquito; it is a serious indictment of one of the leading American universities. It should be taken seriously.

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Mr. Hoover to M. Laval

(A Conversation Which Might Take Place in the White House in October, 1931)

YOUR Excellency, it is with profound satisfaction that I welcome you to the White House and to this country. I am sure that I have but voiced the opinion of the whole American people when I say that we are deeply honored by your coming to us just at this time to discuss freely and frankly the relations between our two countries, and, even more important, the relationship of these two great democracies to the existing world problems and crisis.

I am sure you will appreciate, M. Laval, that I do not in the slightest degree exaggerate when I say that the situation in which the world finds itself is the gravest that we have ever faced from the point of view of the existing forms of society. I feel very strongly that you will not disagree with me that upon us both rests the heaviest responsibility that men in our respective positions could possibly bear. We in this country are struggling with an economic depression which bids fair to be unparalleled in its duration and is certainly without parallel in its international ramifications, for in no other such crisis has the whole world been drawn into the fellowship of suffering and misery. Never before have there been such vast armies of unemployed. Never before have men faced the future with such anxiety as to what the morrow may bring forth. Never before has there been such a confusion of counsels among economists and financiers and those whom men have heretofore considered experts in such matters. Never before has there been such widespread agricultural depression or such a catastrophic fall of prices for so many of the world's raw materials. In addition to that, the existing capitalist civilization finds itself gravely challenged by what some call a new order of society.

Under these circumstances, M. Laval, it is of the utmost importance that we deal fearlessly and frankly with one another, that we avoid any of the indirections to which diplomats so readily lend themselves. The responsibility is primarily ours because ours are the richest lands, yours the least affected by the depression; between us we hold two-thirds of the world's gold. If we fail to reach an understanding, it means that the world will be more than ever adrift upon uncharted seas, without rudder, without direction. Let me lead off by telling you precisely what is in my mind. First, as to war debts and reparations. I realize that the moratorium inaugurated last summer was at best only a preliminary step; the situation cannot any longer be left as it is for the reason that the uncertainty as to the disposition of debts and reparations at the conclusion of the year of grace must be removed if states are to make their budgets intelligently, if there is to be a genuine restoration of confidence among the peoples of Europe, and especially those of England and Germany. You will agree, I am sure, that in this so rapidly changing situation we cannot fall back upon the formula of "capacity to pay" which my country used in making the debt settlements. No one can tell what the capacity to pay of even your strong nation may be six months or a year hence. I therefore wish you to know that I shall appeal to the Congress of the United States, as soon as it meets, for the canceling of all debts, believing that this forgiveness of debt will benefit my own country as much as the foreign countries concerned. It will not be easy to convince the Congress of the righteousness of this position. My success with the moratorium emboldens me, however, to believe that I can once more appeal with good results to the generosity and wisdom of my countrymen.

I cannot, however, ask this great favor of the Congress without giving it the definite assurance that reparations payments from the defeated Central Powers shall also cease. The necessity of an economically sound Central Europe to the welfare and safety of the former Allies has been demonstrated beyond question by the relationship of British investments in Germany to England's departure from the gold standard. But our Congress will ask something more than that. The coming disarmament conference in Geneva is indissolubly bound up with the economic restoration of Europe. You will not have forgotten that your last yearly payment to us for your debt account was only $44,350,000, while your annual military and naval expenditures reached the enormous sum of $432,000,000—ten times as much. Even in Great Britain only 4.2 per cent of its budget funds were paid to us, while 14 per cent went to army and navy. If canceling reparations will lead to the cutting of military and naval expenditures in half, it will obviously be a far greater boon in pounds and francs. But a still greater benefit will come from it because of the immediate increase in international good-will, in the removal of the fears of another war which distract so many portions of Europe. I am happy to tell you, as an evidence of our own good-will, that the delegation which we shall send to Geneva will offer a reduction of at least 50 per cent of our naval and military armaments, believing this to be the most substantial contribution we could make to the restoration of the world. It will be of the utmost importance if I can inform the Congress that your honored Government will join with us in this move.

There are still other things which I shall wish to discuss with you at leisure. Even in America we have learned that the time has come to remove every hindrance to trade. I am therefore in favor of the immediate calling of an international conference composed only of officials of as high rank as yourself, M. Laval, to deal immediately with the reduction of tariffs all along the line.

I shall eagerly await your answer to my proposals. You will permit me, I am sure, in closing, to stress once more the tremendous responsibility and opportunity which are ours. We two can come to an agreement here which will go far toward reviving the hopes of humanity and ending the needless suffering of millions. What that would mean to your reputation and mine in the tomes of history, I need not say. You, I am sure, no more than I are desirous of having those future historians, who may record generations and centuries hence the fate of our time, write that among those statesmen who failed to come to the rescue of the capitalist society that came to its end in the third decade of the twentieth century were the Premier of France and the President of the United States, although once they had in their hands the chance to perform miracles.

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America and the League

AMERICAN cooperation with the League of Nations in attempting to end the Manchurian crisis is of more than passing significance. It means that for the first time the United States is taking part in an international effort to prevent a threatened war. The precedent thus established will almost certainly influence the future attitude of this country when similar crises arise, and therefore is to be applauded. Had this cooperation come earlier in the present case, the weaknesses which have developed in the negotiations looking toward a solution might have been averted. As it is, the present teamwork between Geneva and Washington may yet, or so we hope, serve to bring about a just rectification of the Manchurian situation.

Mukden was occupied by Japanese troops on September 18. The Chinese promptly appealed to the League of Nations. The League asked Tokio for an explanation, and the Japanese representative at Geneva promised that the troops would be withdrawn. The League also asked the United States to join in its protest to China and Japan. This the State Department did by sending softly worded notes to Nanking and Tokio calling attention to the Manchurian situation and asking that the two countries respect their various treaty obligations. Nothing was said of the 1922 treaty under which Japan had expressly agreed to refrain from violating the independence, sovereignty, or territorial and administrative integrity of China. Nor did the notes specifically mention the Kellogg pact, under which both countries had agreed to settle their differences only by pacific means. This tactful course led nowhere. The Japanese troops not only remained in occupation of Chinese territory in Manchuria, but extended their hostile operations. Chinese protestations against this defiance by Japan of the League's recommendations finally led the League Council to meet in extraordinary session to reconsider the situation. Again Washington was undecided as to its own course, but offered to help Geneva as best it could in bringing about a settlement. The League Council voted almost at once to have an American representative take part in its deliberations, although it knew Japan was opposed to such action. To get around this difficulty the Council sidetracked its own peace machinery and elected to invoke the Kellogg pact against both China and Japan.

Thus the League has finally taken action which the United States could have initiated alone, and with far greater effect, immediately after the occupation of Mukden. As it is, the invoking of the Kellogg treaty comes now as a second thought. By its indecision at the start Washington showed that it does not have the unyielding faith in this agreement which it must have to compel proper observance by other Powers. The League, too, appears to have favored the Kellogg pact only as a means of insuring American cooperation in its activities, going even to the length of deserting its Covenant to accomplish that end. Lastly, Washington's decision to join with the League in the task of settling the Manchurian crisis, this being the only time it has cooperated with Geneva for the purpose of preventing a threatened war, is looked upon with deep suspicion in Tokio and has only increased Tokio's determination to oppose any and all Western interference in what it considers a problem involving China and Japan alone. Soviet Russia also has a definite interest in the Manchurian question. Russia is a signatory of the Kellogg treaty, but not a member of the League. Had Washington invoked the Kellogg pact on its own initiative (as it did in the Russo-Chinese dispute over the Chinese Eastern Railway two years ago) it would have been compelled to cooperate with Moscow, and this, of course, would have been inconsistent with its non-recognition policy. Instead, the burden of bringing the anti-war treaty into play has been shifted to the League Council. This leaves Russia outside the international cooperative effort to bring peace to Manchuria. But it also leaves Russia free to join with Japan (or to act independently) in defending its own Manchurian interests, which may be done in a manner not compatible with any solution agreed upon by Geneva and Washington.

America and the League have to do more than merely prevent war in the Far East, if they are sincere in their desire to promote peace. They must see that both sides in the Manchurian dispute receive justice in accordance with the League Covenant and the Kellogg treaty. China is doubtless not altogether without blame, but Japan, by its hostile occupation of South Manchuria, has openly violated both of these agreements. It has in effect, if not by resorting to a formal declaration of hostile intentions, already prosecuted a successful war. It now seeks to hold the spoils of that belligerent action by negotiating directly with China, thus continuing to sabotage its obligations under the several international peace agreements to which it is a party. So it is not alone a question of preventing a war, but one of rectifying a difficult situation brought about by a war that has already taken place. If Japan cannot be persuaded of the illegality of its position, and induced to join in an international effort to solve the problem thereby created, the whole war-prevention system erected since 1918 will be undermined.

Edison

A GREAT American and a benefactor of all humanity was Thomas A. Edison. The sobriquet of "wizard" popularly applied to him was by no means undeserved, for if he was not a genius it would be hard to find anyone really to merit the designation. Since he rose without education to world-wide fame and a place among the immortals of science, his career will be once more heralded as "typically American," especially in this hour when so many of our most conservative and hitherto contented citizens have been so thoroughly convinced by our malicious stock market that something is wrong after all with our wonderful American system. Yet a career like Edison's can, in a sense, never be typical. For only rarely does fate create so extraordinary a spirit, so gifted an intelligence.

That he lacked a scholarly and scientific training only made his achievements the more remarkable. Whether the training of a Helmholtz or a Siemens or a Thomson would have crippled this inventive genius or caused it to flower more effectively will always be a moot question. It is beyond doubt, however, that he largely made up for his lack of training by his extraordinary industry and his incredible power to immerse himself hours without end in a given problem.

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His methods were daring and original, his experiments extraordinarily minute and of the widest range. No number of failures could discourage him. His belief in his impending success in anything that he undertook persisted to the end. In a single month, January, 1879, he personally made a most exhaustive study of eight metals, covering forty pages of detailed experiments and deductions. He freely admitted that his methods were empirical where he dealt with chemistry—in this he liked to compare himself to Luther Burbank. But he once said: "When it comes to problems of a mechanical nature, I want to tell you that all I've ever tackled and solved have been done by hard, logical thinking."

None the less, it is true that he tried everything that might possibly lead to a given goal. For example, when searching for a filament to produce his incandescent lamp, he sent one man all around the world, and another to comb South America, for the material which might solve his problem, and it was solved. For him it was a blessing that millions of dollars flowed in upon him. He sent them on their way again without a moment's hesitation in his desire to wring another secret out of nature, to discover the hiding-place of some material that would help him to a new invention. Nothing ever altered the simplicity of his life or his devotion to his self-imposed tasks, and he was fortunate, indeed, in being able to stick to his laboratory almost to the very end. That he had vision in things scientific was frequently proved; in 1886, for example, he made on one day fifteen separate predictions as to the growth and future of the electrical business. Many years later twelve of these were found to have been completely fulfilled. But when he ventured into other fields and expressed his views on politics and social problems and on questions of labor, he floundered as deeply as does his friend Henry Ford. Nor did he see wisely in the matter of the relation of capital to labor. He was not a model employer—any more than Henry Ford.

Something of the fertility of Mr. Edison's mind is shown by the fact that up to 1910 he had already filed applications for patents covering 1,500 inventions. His greatest achievement was, of course, the incandescent lamp; one has only to imagine what the modern world would be like without Mr. Edison's electrical contributions to the comfort and convenience of daily life to measure the immensity of his service to mankind. The telephone and the telegraph bear for all time the marks of his skill. The stock-ticker and the phonograph are children of his brain, while the debt of the moving picture to him is immeasurable. Failures there were galore. He squandered millions upon his magnetic-ore milling works; his Edison Portland cement, like his poured cement houses for workers, has never risen to expectations. His process for giving power to electric street cars never came into use, nor did his plan for moving wheat trains by electricity created by windmills. A few years ago he jubilantly announced that at last he had developed the storage battery to a point where it could drive every gasoline automobile off the streets. Upon these and many other efforts he spent fortune after fortune, experimenting, experimenting, experimenting. Indeed, his true title is the Great Experimenter-Inventor. But none of his failures can for a moment detract from the extraordinary range of his successes, or hide the fact that Thomas A. Edison did more to bring the modern age of comfort, convenience, and industry than any other man in history.

Fame

THE world learned with surprise that Mahatma Gandhi had never heard of Charlie Chaplin. That fact may be taken to prove—if anything can—that no fame is absolute, but if we may rely upon an investigation recently undertaken by our sprightly contemporary *Variety*, then the only road to even quasi-universal renown is either moving-picture acting or some other crime. A list of about 150 supposedly well-known names was submitted to a random group of 200 Chicagoans, and the results seem to indicate beyond any reasonable doubt that only the stars of moviedom and gangland are really famous. Only John Barrymore and Joan Crawford were known to everyone and only Al Capone and Lupe Velez known to all but two. Atwater Kent and the Ringling brothers (both of whom score 96 per cent) were the most famous names outside the criminal and film worlds, and Benito Mussolini (95 per cent) is the best-known of all political personages. But lest the Duce should find this fact fatal to his shrinking modesty, we will remind him that sixteen persons are better known in Chicago, while he stands only 1 per cent above Jake Lingle, murdered Chicago reporter, and only 4 per cent above Andy Gump.

Mighty is the power of the press but even mightier, it would appear, is the power of the press agent, for there is in the list a pretty good indication that fame in Chicago is largely manufactured and that those best known are those who have seen to it that they should be. Thus Texas Guinan is better known than Gandhi, and Mae West is better known than either Andrew Mellon or Stalin. The only people who stand surprisingly high are those who, for one reason or another, have figured much in the headlines. Albert Einstein scores 82 per cent and stands above both Peggy Hopkins Joyce and "Peaches" Browning, but he is a long way below Fatty Arbuckle and Aimee McPherson—both, scoring 87 per cent, and therefore evidence of the fact that the public is equally interested in alleged religion and alleged rape.

Almost the whole list is interesting—if not alarming—to those who are concerned with the mentality of a democracy. What does it mean when we discover that Ted Weems (whoever he may be) is better known than either Andrew Mellon, Samuel Insull, or Albert Fall; or that more people can identify Virgil Kirkland (whoever he may be) than Stalin, William Hohenzollern, or Colonel House? Nor is the misinformation possessed by the 200 less striking than their ignorance. Vincent Astor was identified five times as an actor and once as a fur dealer; three persons thought that the Mayo brothers were circus owners or performers; and at least one believed Roger Wolff Kahn to be a general in the United States Army. To various individuals Yehudi Menuhin was a clairvoyant, an Indian prince, and the oldest man in the world, while to four he was a rabbi.

For us the greatest shock was reserved until we came very near the bottom of the list. Oswald Garrison Villard—editor of *The Nation* in case you don't know—scores just 7 per cent in *Variety's* contest and stands exactly on a level with Clarence Brown, Corey Ford, and Devereaux Milburn. We hesitate to say how many have outdistanced him.

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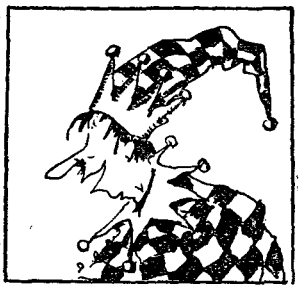
Speaking of Revolution . . .

By HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON



ONE of the surest signs that all is not well with the body politic is an uncomfortable sense of "touchiness" among those who occupy the seats of the mighty. My amiable colleagues (once a newspaperman always, etc., etc.), my amiable and brave colleagues now walking the cold pavement of Grub Street, branded for the rest of their days with a big red letter M (indicating that they have been caught contributing to a wicked booklet full of lèse majesté), will undoubtedly bear me out. But an even older and infinitely more experienced social organization, known familiarly as the Church of Rome, an institution which in bygone days believed right royally in the excellent maxim of "live and let live," is showing increasing signs of this most deplorable "touchiness." They had better be careful or they will have another La Barre case on their hands and La Barre cases are apt to provoke other Voltaires. I realize that thus far no Voltaire has yet appeared upon the horizon. But you never can tell! When the spindling child of old Maître Arouet was born, there was no one then to prophesy that some day this squealing infant would upset a throne and shake a church.

This really is no time for fussy outbursts of ill-concealed anger. The brethren in Moscow present us with the sad sight of what a mess can be made of life as soon as the national sense of humor has been relegated to the darkest dungeon of some remote Schlüsselburg. Lenin could see a joke but Stalin is as entertaining as the late Mary Baker Glover Eddy (I hope I got them all). Lenin, therefore, had a chance. Stalin has none. Does that mean that I expect nothing to come of the Noble Experiment? (I mean Stalin's Noble Experiment, not Hoover's.) Right you are, the first time! In the long run our Bolshevik comrades will fail because they take themselves as seriously as their work. It is an excellent thing for a man to take his work seriously. The moment he begins to take himself seriously, he is lost.

All of which is merely a pleasant hors d'oeuvre to the remark that is to follow, which is nothing more or less than the suggestion that we return to the establishment of official court fools, to be accredited to all the Imperial, Pontifical, Royal, and Presidential Courts of this planet.

The more I study the Middle Ages, the more I am struck with the extreme wisdom of those slightly odoriferous ancestors of ours who had no bathtubs in their homes yet somehow managed to keep their minds as fresh and bright as a bunch of new-grown daisies. For one thing they strongly believed in certain necessary public safety valves, and realizing that the human race is merely human, they provided mortal man with a series of official "escapes" which kept their form of society going for centuries after it seemed to have outlived its usefulness. Mother Church gave them a sublime example. Instead of suppressing the ancient Roman Saturnalia, these were gently (though not too genteelly) modified into the famous Feast of Fools, during which laymen played the part of bishops and cardinals and were allowed to burlesque the whole complicated fabric of religion and theology. Even the "pretty girl" element was not lacking, and the title by which these entertainments became popularly known, the Festa Asinorum, or the Feast of the Holy Ass, was a sufficient indication of the sort of thing which kept the populace within bounds during the other 364 days of the year.

Now one hates to make suggestions to our esteemed Administration, for if they were to be taken seriously, that would merely mean the appointment of still another committee, and the Lord knows we have enough of these. But if I were a member of Congress (which I am not as I voted for Broun at the last election) I should advise that some of the millions saved this year on the army and navy and the Injuns be spent hiring an official White House Court Fool. I could even submit the names of several highly desirable candidates for the job. Ed Wynne or Willie Howard or the Marx family in toto. Will Rogers would have been an ideal court jester up to a few years ago, but now he works for the *Times*. Bernard Shaw, if he were not addicted to too much talking and too many talkies and were some twenty years younger, would have filled the vacancy quite acceptably.

But the reader will get the general trend of my argument. We are on the verge of mighty events which threaten to change the entire aspect of our present civilization. I like that particular form of civilization because it is the only civilization I have every really known and I am too old now to change. But I see no chance of saving this world from our recent follies unless we cease to take ourselves as seriously as we have grown in the habit of doing. (*Nation* and *New Republic* please copy.)

At the present moment we could get a court fool at a very reasonable price, for the theatrical season promises to be (in the terms of our charming friend, Anita Loos) completely "lousy." Five thousand dollars wisely invested in an A-1 court fool right now might save us five thousand million dollars two years hence.

Of course certain supplementary laws would have to be passed to make the poor devil immune from the All Highest Displeasure. But that difficulty, too, could be avoided quite nicely within the course of the next six months. If the fellow proves a success, why not let him run for President on a ticket supported by the Republicans and Democrats, the Socialists, and the Methodists? A few years ago we were offered the opportunity to vote for a candidate who was in jail but we were too busy with the war to provide ourselves with that most ideal of all sovereigns, a ruler *in partibus infidelium*. Let us do better this time. When all wise men have failed, why not try an honest fool?

No, the writer of this present piece is no candidate. He refuses to run. He is much too serious-minded.

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The Manchurian Battleground

By MAURITZ A. HALLGREN

NEITHER public pledges by responsible statesmen nor the power of international agreements seem strong enough to stem the imperialistic tendencies of ambitious nations. These tendencies are always carefully disguised, and can always be plausibly explained. In the case of Manchuria, for example, we have been told that "Japan has no imperialistic designs. Her interest is solely economic." Such was the assurance given China in 1927 by Kenkichi Yoshizawa, then Japanese Minister to Peking, now Japanese representative on the League of Nations Council. Yet somehow these innocent economic interests lead all too frequently to territorial aggression. That is the story behind the recent news from Manchuria, which is once more in the hands of alien troops, and it is the story the same Yoshizawa has lately been attempting to explain to his fellow-members of the League Council. In former years the thing was done by means of secret treaties and secret protocols looking toward the exploitation and possible partition of the Three Eastern Provinces (Manchuria). While this system was in vogue three wars were fought directly or indirectly over Manchuria, while blood in more than sufficient quantities was spilled on other and less formal occasions. Today, however, with the whole world renouncing war and entering into arrangements designed to insure peace, secret treaties are no longer necessary. In their place have come frank professions of peaceful and honest intentions; all thought of political penetration abroad, or of territorial aggression, is publicly set aside.

It was only ten years ago, at the Washington conference of 1921-22, that Japan formally abandoned, to all appearances with complete sincerity, its aggressive policy toward China. By abrogating the alliance with Great Britain (under the protection of which the Japanese had wrested the Liaotung peninsula from Russia), by agreeing to withdraw from Shantung, and by adhering to the Nine-Power Pacific Treaty, wherein it undertook "to respect the sovereignty, the independence, and the territorial and administrative integrity of China," Japan gave the world good reason to hope that it had at last turned from its former course of unashamed imperialism. Through the next five years the new "policy of friendship" predominated in Japan's relations with China. In April, 1923, the Japanese agreed to terminate the Lansing-Ishii "gentlemen's agreement," under which this country had recognized "Japan's special interests in China, particularly in the part to which her possessions are contiguous." At about the same time the Japanese government, as a further pledge of friendship, turned over Japan's share of the Boxer indemnity, as well as the payments China was required to make on the Shantung railway properties, to a special fund for Chinese educational and cultural work. Further concrete evidence of the new policy was given by the gracious manner in which the Japanese handled the grave problem arising out of the Shanghai riots of May 30, 1925. The trouble began when a Chinese worker was shot by Japanese mill guards. Demonstrations against foreigners spread quickly throughout China. But Japan not only protected its own nationals against the worst effects of these disorders, but also heightened its prestige among the Chinese by apologizing for the shooting and paying the dead worker's family a generous indemnity. Again, during the Nanking incident of March 24, 1927, in which Japanese as well as other foreign property was destroyed, Japan kept its head. It refused to join in the demand advanced by other Powers that the Nationalists be punished by military occupation of certain portions of their territory.

Five years after the Washington conference, Baron Shidehara, then as now Foreign Minister of Japan, renewed the pledge given at Washington. He told the Diet in January, 1927, that Japan would "respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China and scrupulously avoid all interference in her domestic strife." Though the fact may be open to misinterpretation, it must be noted, however, that at the time Shidehara made this statement the civil warfare in China was confined largely to the south, where Japanese interests were less important than in the north. As the victorious Nationalist armies moved northward, menacing Japanese property and threatening to invade Manchuria, where Japan has enormous holdings, the liberal Wakatsuki Government found its position increasingly difficult. By April the Cabinet fell—the Chinese Nationalists were then in possession of the Yangtze valley and drawing uncomfortably close to the Great Wall and the rich Manchurian provinces that lie behind. A new government headed by Baron Tanaka, outspoken imperialist and leader of the military (Seiyukai) party, was formed in Tokio. With the rise of Tanaka began the decline of Shidehara's "friendship policy." The new attitude, though Tanaka's Government lived only until 1929, has persisted to this day. Despite the return to power of the liberal (Minseito) party, and with it Shidehara to the Foreign Ministry, there has been no substantial change in the policy laid down by Tanaka.

Baron Tanaka began his administration with a patriotic flourish. Shidehara had been too lenient with the Chinese; public opinion had forced the old government out for that reason; Tanaka would institute much-needed changes. He convened in Tokio in June, 1927, a conference of the leading officials of the War and Navy ministries, the Governor of Kwantung (Lower Manchuria), the commander-in-chief of the Kwantung army, the Minister to Peking, and the consuls general at Mukden and Shanghai. Addressing these officials, he enunciated his "positive policy" for dealing with China. In the first few paragraphs of his statement he paid lip service to Japan's avowed desire to see peace and order restored in China. But in paragraphs 6, 7, and 8 he declared that "since Manchuria and Mongolia, particularly the Three Eastern Provinces, have an important bearing upon the national defense and existence of this country, we must devote special attention to those regions. . . . If the disturbances spread to Manchuria and Mongolia, and as a result peace and order are disrupted, thereby menacing our special position and rights and interests in those regions, we must be determined to defend them, no matter whence the menace

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comes, and take proper steps without loss of time in order to preserve the regions as lands for peaceful habitation and development equally to Japanese and foreigners." Here Tanaka went farther than any of his predecessors. Indeed, the Osaka *Asahi* declared that "as the general outlines of the new Manchurian and Mongolian policy clearly show, the present Cabinet is more positive about Japan's special position in Manchuria and Mongolia than any other Ministry in the past. It is doubtful whether the Okuma Cabinet had so confirmed a view about Japan's position when it formulated the famous Twenty-One Demands of 1915."

Tanaka's policy began to function at once. Jotaro Yamamoto, secretary general of the military party, was appointed president of the South Manchuria Railway, the principal vested interest of the Japanese in the Three Eastern Provinces. Yamamoto had previously expressed himself as dissatisfied with the railway company's inclination "to attach more importance to business profits than *the company's innate mission.*" After his appointment he declared that "the railway company has a more important mission than a merely economic one." In a military direction also the new policy began to take form. The presence of an unusual number of Japanese troops in Shantung prevented the Chinese Nationalists from continuing their victorious march northward, and they were compelled to suspend their drive on Peking for a year. The Chinese press reported at the time that Japanese soldiers had taken part in the fighting against the Nationalists. This was but a foretaste of the military interference that was to come the next year. Meanwhile the Tanaka Government reached out to strengthen its new policy in other quarters. With the termination of the Lansing-Ishii agreement the United States no longer recognized Japan as having a special position in Manchuria. The Japanese, however, thoroughly appreciated the moral assistance such recognition would give them in the event of future difficulties over their future activities in Manchuria. They moved to make up this deficiency, and thus to tie Washington's hands, by negotiating a $30,000,000 loan with American bankers for the use of the South Manchuria Railway. This loan would not only have given this country an interest to protect in case of disturbances in Manchuria, but, in the words of the Tokio correspondent of the *Wall Street Journal,* Japan would have welcomed "an American loan to the South Manchuria Railway Company as a tacit admission of Japan's 'special position' in Manchuria." But the State Department, whose policy requires that all foreign-loan agreements be submitted to it for examination, indicated to the bankers that it would rather not pass upon the question. The negotiations were thereupon dropped.

In the spring of 1928 the Nationalists resumed their advance northward. Tokio promptly dispatched six men-of-war and a brigade of troops to Shantung "to protect Japanese lives." This was not an extraordinary measure; other Powers had followed the same procedure when the Chinese troops were running over the Yangtze valley; but the Japanese force was unusually large, so large in fact that it aroused the suspicions of both the Nanking and Peking governments. These suspicions were confirmed when the Japanese summarily warned both sides in the Chinese war that they would not tolerate any interference with the operations of the Shantung railway, the warning coming in face of Baron Tanaka's promise that there would be no Japanese intervention in the civil war. To carry out the threat Japanese soldiers were rushed to Tsinan, which they entered on May 1 just as the Nationalist army was pouring in from the south. The inevitable battle between the two forces began two days later; large sections of the city were bombarded by the Japanese, with heavy losses of life and extensive destruction of property; 20,000 Chinese soldiers were captured and forcibly disarmed; the Nationalists were compelled to retreat southward. However, a month later Peking fell to Feng Yu-hsiang and Yen Hsi-shan, allies of the Nationalists, bringing the war to the very border of Manchuria.

Here the "positive policy" of Tanaka was given full play. Chang Tso-lin, the Manchurian war lord, had been killed under mysterious circumstances as he was entering Mukden on June 4, his son, Chang Hsueh-liang, succeeding to the dictatorship of the Three Eastern Provinces. Tokio immediately saw an opportunity to separate Manchuria from the rest of China. Consequently young Chang was warned early in July, said the Associated Press, "against joining Manchuria with the Nationalist Government of China. Premier Tanaka ordered that the warning be sent, hoping to dissuade Manchuria from the Nationalist alliance because he felt Japan's position in Manchuria would be jeopardized if Nationalist rule predominated." A few weeks earlier, when the armies of Feng and Yen were maneuvering to break through the Great Wall and enter the Three Eastern Provinces, Yousoke Matsuoka, vice-president of the South Manchuria Railway (note again the interest of the railway company in political affairs), declared that the Japanese would "not permit either Mukden or Nanking to carry the fighting into Manchuria. If they are able to get together and settle their political differences peacefully, all right; if not, we shall close the door at Shanhaikwan (at the eastern end of the Great Wall) and not permit the Southern armies to pass." That this was tantamount to setting up a Japanese protectorate over Manchuria did not disturb Matsuoka. Both of these warnings being unheeded, Foreign Minister Hayashi went in person to Mukden to deliver an ultimatum to Chang Hsueh-liang. However, the ultimatum was likewise without effect, and Tanaka, embarrassed by growing opposition at home, did not press the issue.

There have been two checks on Japan's imperialistic aspirations in Manchuria. The first has been the economic difficulties in which Japan has found itself since the collapse of its mushroom prosperity of the World War period. Japan suffered from an acute depression in 1920, and this was aggravated by the tremendous blow dealt the country by the disastrous earthquake of 1923. When Tanaka came into power his tactics aroused deep resentment throughout China. By the spring of 1928 this resentment had taken the form of a boycott against Japanese goods, which cut heavily into Japan's exports. Exporters and manufacturers protested heatedly against continuance of the policy of intervention, while the opposition party, the Minseito, was greatly strengthened by the public reaction to Tanaka's extreme measures. These factors, together with certain official scandals that were disclosed by the press, brought about the fall of the Tanaka Government on July 2, 1929. The second potential check is the more liberal suffrage law adopted in 1925. This measure, by removing the last property qualification on universal manhood suffrage, increased the Japanese electorate from 3,341,000 to 12,534,360. Obviously

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the new voters were drawn almost entirely from the laboring and small farmer classes. While the initial hope that the new voters, whose interests are of necessity opposed to imperialism, would exercise an important influence on government policy has not been realized, partly because of their failure to group themselves into a single proletarian party, they have nevertheless been instrumental in strengthening the liberal Minseito Party.

Yet it must not be forgotten that the Minseito Party is now in power, and that despite its avowed adherence to a policy of peaceful industrial penetration of Manchuria it is responsible for the recent military occupation of that territory. Here, perhaps, is revealed the most vicious aspect of imperialism. So delicate is Japan's position in Manchuria, thanks to imperialistic ventures of the past and to Baron Tanaka, that notwithstanding the democratization of the country, the economic emergency (which threatens to become even more grave through renewal of the Chinese boycott), and the presumably sincere desire of the Minseito Party to keep Japan at peace with China, the government controlled by that party finds itself once again persuaded to resort to military intervention in order to defend what it considers its proper interests in a foreign country.

To what extent the foot-loose military officials, responsible to no one but the throne, are to blame for this latest misadventure can only be guessed. It is fairly certain that the militarists forced the issue by their unprovoked attack upon Mukden. It is also worth noting that the invasion came at a time when the Western World's attention was absorbed in its own economic difficulties. This apparent effort to take advantage of a China disabled from years of civil warfare and suffering from the greatest natural calamity of recent centuries, the Yangtze flood, while the rest of the world was looking the other way, is strangely reminiscent of the circumstances attending the infamous Twenty-One Demands. At that time the military party rushed Japanese troops into Shangtung, forced the 1915 treaties upon China, and paved the way for permanent occupation of Manchuria. Compelled to surrender most of these spoils at the Washington conference, the military party nevertheless retained a secure foothold, not only in Japanese politics, but through the 1915 treaties upon Manchuria itself. It now appears that the militarists have forced a moderate Japanese government, perhaps against its own inclinations, to support them in yet another attempt to annex the rich and strategically important Three Eastern Provinces.

The White House Magicians

II. Playing with Statistics*

By W. P. MANGOLD

IN the preceding section of this article an attempt was made to recount in some detail the numerous efforts of President Hoover and his officials to conjure up the genie of prosperity. Their magic formula varied from bold assertions that there was nothing wrong to cheerful promises that we would be out of the depression in thirty or sixty days. And when the genie proved unresponsive to these calls, there were lectures on the fortitude of Valley Forge and on rugged individualism. But as the depression deepened, it became more and more obvious that the magic had been bungled. The sagging business curve showed plainly that President Hoover and his publicity men did not know—or did not care to know—what they were talking about.

Why this discredited optimism was continued long after it had lost all plausibility remains a mystery. Senator Fess has advanced the theory that this sort of magic would have worked had it not been for the nefarious tactics of the "bears" throughout the land. Persons high in Republican circles, said the Senator on October 14, 1930, were beginning to believe that a concerted effort was on foot "to utilize the stock market as a method of discrediting the Administration." This was pretty obvious, he observed, because "every time an Administration official gives out an optimistic statement about business conditions, the market immediately drops." Other people, too, had observed this rather uncomplimentary reaction of the market to the White House promises, but no one else, so far as we know, has offered so ingenious an explanation.

But have the "bears" likewise been driving down the standard of living—also to discredit the Administration? For there has been a similarly strange discrepancy between the facts of unemployment and Mr. Hoover's fancies. The information about wages and unemployment which has been published in Washington since the beginning of the depression has been of two different kinds: President Hoover and his Cabinet have been publishing one kind, and the cold-blooded statisticians of the Department of Labor have been publishing another. The Administration has reported endless upturns in employment, and it has fostered the illusion that it has managed to maintain wages. Meanwhile the government's own statisticians have proceeded to report month by month fewer gainful workers and smaller pay rolls. From October, 1929, through September, 1931, their figures show a drop of more than 30 per cent in employment and of more than 40 per cent in pay rolls in the fifteen major industrial groups. President Hoover has curiously refrained from mentioning these declines, although it would seem that the information must be available for his use.

In his message to Congress on December 3, 1929, the President foresaw no unemployment problem. The market crash, he said, had created "unwarranted pessimism and fear." He was convinced that the voluntary measures of cooperation which he had instituted with the industrial leaders—among which was the pledge of wage maintenance—had reestablished confidence. "Wages should remain stable," he promised, and "a very large degree of industrial unemployment and suffering which would otherwise have occurred has been prevented." One month later the director

* Part I, Prosperity Invocations, appeared in the issue of October 21.—Editor The Nation.

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of the employment service of the Department of Labor, Francis I. Jones, cheerfully predicted to Secretary Davis that 1930 would "measure in volume of business with the preceding year." Furthermore, he said, "the trend of industrial activity and employment will be gradually upward during the first quarter, and as the new year advances, the level of production and employment in the major industries should compare favorably with that maintained throughout the year just ended." This promise seemed to be reaching fulfilment as President Hoover announced on January 21 that the "tide of employment has changed in the right direction," and on January 27 that "the increase of employment is current in practically every industry. There are one or two minor spots which did not show an increase, but they are generally classified as small industries."

When Mr. Hoover's first statement was questioned by Miss Frances Perkins, Labor Commissioner of New York State, the gain was reaffirmed by Secretary Davis. "There is developing an inclination in some quarters," he remarked on January 24, "to make politics out of our employment situation." As the year progressed Mr. Davis cited in great detail the figures on employment gains. Speaking over the radio on February 13, he declared that "the week of January 6 showed an increase in number on the pay roll of 3.4 per cent, the following week an increase of 3.3 per cent, and the week of January 20 an increase of 0.5, while the week of January 27 showed a slight increase of 0.3. Let us be thankful that we are getting back on our feet again." The denouement of this promising story came one week later when the Department of Labor published data showing that employment in January was actually 2.6 per cent less than in December for the eight major industrial groups. Similarly, it was shown that pay rolls had declined more than 5 per cent.

With the figures for current employment affording small comfort, therefore, the Administration spokesmen turned to the future. "Within the next sixty or ninety days the country will be on a normal employment basis," declared the employment service of the Department of Labor on February 13. Relief should come "within the very near future," was Mr. Davis's opinion on March 4. And on the following day President Hoover was hopeful that the unemployment situation would be "greatly remedied in the next sixty days." Two days later the President issued his famous prediction that "the worst effects of the crash upon employment will have passed during the next sixty days." In the same statement Mr. Hoover also reported that unemployment "amounting to distress" was "mainly concentrated in twelve States," and that conditions in the remaining thirty-six were practically normal. Naturally the Washington correspondents were interested to learn the names of the twelve States to which the President referred. The Administration, however, refused to "single these out," said the New York *Times*, because "it desired the unemployment problem to be considered as a national rather than a sectional problem." Thus Mr. Hoover has somewhat altered his views on unemployment during the past year and a half. For now he is bending every effort to impress the country that it is a matter of purely local concern. We assume that this change arises from the fact that unemployment today "amounting to distress" is concentrated mainly in forty-eight States as against only twelve in 1930. Obviously, this makes the problem local throughout the country.

On March 7 Secretaries Davis and Lamont issued a joint statement purporting to show that employment in the manufacturing industries had increased 8 per cent since the beginning of the year. Shortly thereafter the statisticians in Mr. Davis's own department revealed that the trend of employment in February had wavered slightly upward—0.1 per cent. Where, then, did these honorable gentlemen get their optimistic 8 per cent? Undeterred by these discrepancies, Secretary Davis assured the country on March 18 that the President's "sixty days" prediction would be borne out. Dr. Klein likewise saw conditions improving steadily. Speaking over the radio on May 3, he referred to the "recent period of unemployment which, according to the best indicators, is being gradually left behind." President Hoover was even more positive when he addressed the Chamber of Commerce of the United States on May 1. "A telegraphic canvass of the governors and mayors," he said, "brings with but one exception the unanimous report of the continuously decreasing unemployment each month and the assurance of further decreases in May." Yet the statistics of the Department of Labor disclosed a continuous decline in employment each month from February through May!

A month later Mr. Hoover still refused to admit the seriousness of the unemployment situation. As related by Amos Pinchot in *The Nation* of January 14, 1931, a delegation of important business men visited the President to urge some drastic action by the government to relieve the growing distress. Mr. Hoover assured the delegation that existing relief agencies were adequate; that the peak of unemployment had been reached and passed. "Gentlemen," he said, "you have come six weeks too late."

Of equal interest in retrospect is the once popular Administration slogan "No wage cuts." On May 21, 1930, Secretary Davis addressed the Advertising Federation of America as follows: "If President Hoover accomplishes nothing more in all of his service to the government, that one outstanding thing of his Administration—no reduction in wages—will be . . . remembered forever." President Hoover continued the good cheer in his address to the American Federation of Labor on October 6. The 1929 pledges of industrial leaders to maintain wages, he said, "have been carried out in astonishing degree." On October 29 Secretary Lamont sent a telegram of congratulation to the American Institute of Steel Construction. "I understand," he telegraphed, "the structural-steel industries have not discharged men or reduced wages. This is a fine example." In passing let us note that employment in this field, according to the Department of Labor index, had dropped nearly 20 per cent between October, 1929, and October, 1930; pay rolls had decreased 25 per cent. In his report for the fiscal year 1930, made public December 14, Secretary Lamont declared it was a "noteworthy fact that practically no cuts in wages have been made by employers as a result of the recession in business." The new Secretary of Labor, William Nuckles Doak, qualified as a Hoover official on January 4 of the present year with the observation that "in all the major industries today, standards of wages hold fast because of agreements brought about by the President."

Several months later, on April 24, 1931, Secretary Lamont reported that he had canvassed the principal indus-

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tries and found "no movement to reduce the rates of wages." On the contrary, he found "a desire to support the situation in every way." If true, Mr. Lamont's canvass would certainly indicate that the President's campaign to stabilize wages had been a remarkable success. Unfortunately, it was not true. When the Secretary made his survey, the Labor Bureau, Inc., had already published information on more than 1,500 manufacturing plants which had cut wages.

There is, however, a more important defect in the Administration claim that it has been able to maintain wage rates: it does not mean what it seems to say. It does not mean that the actual earnings of workers—wage income—have not been seriously reduced by the depression. For, obviously, even if wage *rates* are maintained 100 per cent, unemployment and part-time employment can greatly diminish the actual content of the pay envelope. This, of course, is exactly what has happened since October, 1929. Despite the repeated assurances of no wage cuts by Secretaries Davis, Doak, and Lamont, wage income began to suffer immediately after the crash, and it has continued to shrink in almost every month since. In September, if not earlier, the absurd fiction that the President could control wages was finally exposed by the wholesale wage reductions by leading corporations in that month. On these, curiously, Mr. Hoover has not commented. On these, according to the papers, Mr. Hoover prefers to remain neutral!

Such, in part, is the record of discredited magic from Washington. Certainly it is not easy to explain, nor has the Administration tried to explain it. In instance after instance the conclusion is inevitable that either the officials were woefully ignorant of the government's own statistics, or they deliberately misrepresented the real conditions. Why, it may be asked, should men borrow so much trouble by false statements? Perhaps a clue to their purpose may be found in Mr. Hoover's profound antipathy toward legislative efforts to relieve the hardships of the depression. Does not this weekly brewing of "upturns in business," "normal employment in thirty or sixty days," and "no wage cuts" yield a potent antidote for such poisons in the body politic as unemployment insurance, increased income taxes, and social planning? That is, if the magic works.

Pierre Laval

By ROBERT DELL

Paris, September 30

PIERRE LAVAL is an Auvergnat, a barrister, and an ex-Socialist, which is to say that he has all the qualifications for success in French politics. In France socialism, like journalism, "mène à tout, à condition d'en sortir." Nearly all the leading French politicians are barristers or journalists or both, and Laval has been a bit of a journalist too in his time.

The natives of Auvergne have the reputation in France of being exceptionally wily and knowing, not to say a little unscrupulous, and that is a reputation that makes for success in French politics. No politician is really popular in France unless it is believed that he is capable of a little sharp practice on occasion, and that he will not allow his career to be impeded by too scrupulous a regard for political principles. Indeed, generally speaking, the French attach more importance to intelligence than to character and a Frenchman is much more flattered when he is called *malin* than when it is said that he is honest. In their hearts the French doubt whether anybody is really disinterested and they rather suspect a man who appears to be.

Laval, who became Prime Minister last January, was forty-eight in June, one of the two youngest Prime Ministers that France has had in the present century; Briand was the same age—forty-seven—when he became Prime Minister for the first time in 1909. In the history of the Third Republic there has very rarely been a Prime Minister under fifty. Laval is the fourth Prime Minister in the present century who has used the ladder of socialism to climb to office and kicked it down when its purpose was served. The three others were Briand, Millerand, and Viviani. It was as a Socialist that Laval entered the Chamber for the first time at the general election of 1914, as deputy for Aubervilliers, a commune on the outskirts of Paris of which he has for many years been mayor. During the World War he was a "minoritaire," that is to say, one of the minority in the Socialist Party who advocated peace by negotiation, and who in 1917 became the majority of the party. He was defeated at the general election of 1919 and was out of Parliament for five years, but he remained an active member of the left wing of the Socialist Party.

At the Socialist congress at Tours in 1920 Laval was in the majority that voted for affiliation with the Third International, so he became automatically a Communist, but his position was never quite clear. Malicious persons say that after the split that followed the Tours congress he took out a card of membership both in the Communist Party and in the new Socialist Party formed by the defeated minority of the old one, so as to be prepared for any emergency, but I am not prepared to vouch for the truth of this story. In any case Laval has been a dark horse in French politics ever since his reelection to the Chamber in 1924. He had founded with a group of fugitives from the Communist Party a halfway house between socialism and communism called the Socialist-Communist Party, which was strong at Aubervilliers but never spread much beyond the working-class suburbs of Paris and was never a factor of any importance in French politics. He did not, however, remain in it and for the last seven years he has been a political free lance, classed as an "independent," and has belonged to no parliamentary group. It was as an independent of the left that at the senatorial elections in January, 1927, he was elected, at the head of the poll, one of the ten senators for the Department of the Seine.

Anybody with a certain knowledge of French politics will recognize that a man with such a career as this was marked out for ministerial office. Laval got his chance in April, 1925, after the defeat of the Herriot Cabinet in the

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Senate. The municipal elections were then pending and it was thought for some reason that they would show that public opinion was veering around to the right. In fact they resulted in a great victory for the left, which confirmed the victory of the country at the general election for the Chamber a year earlier, but it was on the hypothesis that they would go to the right that Painlevé, who succeeded Herriot as Prime Minister, formed his Cabinet.

By this time Laval had become a close friend of Caillaux, who had been proscribed since his condemnation by the Senate in 1919. It was in Laval's house in the Villa Saïd, a few doors from that where Anatole France had lived for nearly thirty years, that Caillaux stayed when he was summoned to Paris in April, 1925, by Painlevé, who offered him the Ministry of Finance. Painlevé was President of the Chamber when Doumergue, who was then President of the Republic, offered him Herriot's succession, and it was in the official residence of the President of the Chamber at the Palais-Bourbon that the new government was born. The accouchement was a difficult one. I had come back to Paris, after an exile of nearly seven years, only a few weeks earlier, and had not overcome a feeling of strangeness. I felt quite at home for the first time when I found myself in the seething mass of journalists, senators, and deputies that filled the stately halls of Giraldini's palace in the small hours of the morning. Behind closed doors was going on a violent controversy between Briand and Caillaux, faint echoes of which reached us from time to time. Painlevé, who wanted them both in his Cabinet, was trying to reconcile them and succeeded at last after several hours. Briand returned to the Quai d'Orsay, where he has remained ever since, and Caillaux to the Ministry of Finance, where he stayed for only six months. Laval, who had played an important part in the reconciliation, was rewarded with the Ministry of Public Works. He thus entered the inner circle of *ministrables* who form in rotation the nucleus of French governments, and he then attached himself to the fortunes of Briand, who, when he became Prime Minister in November, 1925, made Laval general secretary of the Prime Minister's office. When Briand reconstructed his Cabinet in March, 1925, Laval became Minister of Justice.

Poincaré's return to power put an end for a time to Laval's ministerial career and he did not again hold office until last year, when through Briand's influence he was included in the second Tardieu Cabinet. It was definitely a Cabinet of the right, whereas the Painlevé and Briand cabinets, to which Laval had previously belonged, although not homogeneous, were predominantly of the left, but my brief sketch of Laval's career will have shown that, like Briand, he is eminently adaptable. Last year Laval made a short appearance at Geneva during the Assembly of the League of Nations. He had previously been quite unknown in international circles, and it struck me at once that he must have come for the purpose of making himself known with a view to succeeding Tardieu as Prime Minister. I imparted this hypothesis to a fellow-journalist who was incredulous and seemed to think that I was joking, but he told me next day that he had made inquiries in French quarters and thought that I was right. In fact, Laval was Briand's candidate for the succession, and when Tardieu was defeated in the Senate at the beginning of last December, Doumergue asked Laval to form a Cabinet. He failed because he made it a condition that the Radicals should be represented in the government. The Radical Party refused to allow any of its members to join a government including Tardieu, and Laval would not abandon Tardieu. In January, however, after the fall of the short-lived Steeg Cabinet, Laval did without the Radicals and formed a government of the center and right, that is, a conservative one.

During the past eight months Briand's influence in the government has steadily waned and Laval's has as steadily waxed. He has now the control of French foreign policy almost entirely in his hands and Briand is little more than a figurehead. Laval and the President of the Republic (Doumergue) forced Briand to agree to the repudiation of the Franco-Italian naval agreement. It was, it seems, only a "gentlemen's agreement" which the two governments had not actually signed or initialed; they had merely given their word of honor to accept it. On this ground it was not regarded by the French government as binding. It was with Laval's approval that Doumergue made the famous speech at Nice, which was in effect a repudiation of Briand. Briand was on the point of resigning, but he swallowed the affront and Laval became more than ever the predominant partner. The negotiations in Paris in July with Mellon and Stimson, and afterwards with Brüning and Curtius, were conducted entirely by Laval, and although Briand was present at them he hardly ever opened his mouth, still less made any suggestion. I am told by somebody in a position to know that during the negotiations with Mellon and Stimson about the Hoover proposal, the only remark that Briand made was a reference to the late Dr. Stresemann which had nothing to do with the matter under discussion. During the visit to Berlin Laval has done all the talking and Briand has merely been exhibited to the German public as a sort of guaranty that the present French government is in favor of peace and international reconciliation. As Pertinax put it in *Echo de Paris* on September 29, Briand was brought in like an aged grandmother whom it is desired not to leave out of the family festivities. Indeed, Briand's only function in the French government nowadays seems to be that of a mascot. It is thought that foreign opinion will be satisfied as long as he is there.

The editor of *The Nation* asked me for a character sketch of Laval, and what I have given is a summary of his career, but this is no aberration on my part. It seems to me that anybody can form from the facts of his career a judgment about his character, and that there could be no better criterion for forming one. He is the typical example of the political adventurer who chooses politics as a career with the firm intention of getting to the top somehow.

There is no need to be prejudiced against him on this account. For my part I should rather have to deal with him than with Briand, for I distrust nothing more than sonorous phrases and empty rhetoric. Laval will talk business. He will come down to brass tacks. He is not a statesman and, to do him justice, probably does not imagine himself to be one. He is just an extremely able and astute negotiator who will always try to get the best of a bargain, but he has no preconceived ideas, he is open to reason, and he has a strong sense of realities. Be quite sure that any agreement that you make with him is perfectly clear and free from all ambiguity, and see that he signs it! Remember that he is an Auvergnat!

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In the Driftway

FROM a correspondent in New Jersey the Drifter is taken to task for his yearnings for the quiet country, in contrast to the noisy, disorganized city. The letter says:

> You speak of the orderly peace of life far from the mechanical wonders of a great city. What peace is there today with a radio in every house? I live in a small country town. My business requires me to be in New York for two nights each week. I can sleep and rest in New York in peace. There I hear only the roar of the city, all indefinite, uninterrupted, a steady rhythm. In my country town; on my road where houses are on lots of a half-acre or more, there was peace and quiet until the radio came. Now, in summer, there is no peace. A din of discordant noises blares from every house from noon to midnight and after. On a Sunday afternoon, when peaceful reading is desired, the radio is on in every house. At 7 p.m. when we attempt to dine, Amos and Andy shriek through the streets. When bedtime comes at ten or eleven, jazz rattles our windows.

This is a minority report in more than one respect. The radio has always been described as, of all things, the small townsman's friend, bringing the news and the pleasures of the city to houses far away from them. Can it be that this is not universally true? Can it be that a noisy village street is more wearying than the roar of the city—"all," as this correspondent so deftly says, "indefinite, uninterrupted"?

* * * * *

THE Drifter is willing to draw two conclusions from his letter, both favorites with him. One is that a great city is all things to all men, or anything that any one of its citizens desires it to be. In New York or London you may find the village, friends from home, small-town shops, curb markets, neighbors saluting each other from window to street and back again; you may find the foreign shore, Naples, the Ghetto, the black belt, Syria, Shantytown; you may find the metropolis, theaters, music, jewels, elegantly dressed men and women, the lobbies of grand hotels; you may find the machine age at its crown, skyscrapers, miracles in steel, miles of docks, the world's largest liners, fastest airplanes, most costly motors. You may find peace and quiet or uninterrupted roar. In this multifarious variety every man can find his place and his friends. He can behave as he likes, so he does not make too much noise about it; and even then, the noise of the city is likely to drown out all but the most blatant unconventionality. If you want to stay away from church or live with someone else's wife or dye your hair green, do it in a big city, the largest you can find. Nobody will notice you. But don't try it in the country!

* * * * *

THAT is the Drifter's first contention. The second is not his own, but was pointed out to him by a friend with whom he instantly agreed. It is that the world is getting too small for comfort. Everyone has his radio and knows what is happening all over the globe; everyone has his automobile and soon—God help us!—will have his airplane with which he can proceed rapidly to any corner of the earth that pleases him; what took place in Tokio last night is breakfast food for America; the King of Siam is no longer a mythical monarch whom some adventurous traveler once saw on a white elephant, but a little man in European dress who goes swimming in a cement pool on a suburban estate. We live in a tiny country that an airplane can cross in less than twelve hours; we inhabit a planet that can be circumnavigated in eight days. Alas for the distances we used to have! It took three months once to go from Ohio to Oregon —on foot. It took six months to cross the Atlantic. The universe, as yet, is a thing of millions of light years; our little sphere has become in truth an orange to hold in the hand.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Little Hope for Porto Rico

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: I find myself unable to refrain from voicing my deep disappointment in Mr. Gruening's article entitled Hope for Porto Rico. He credits Governor Roosevelt with a degree of statesmanship and popularity which the facts of the case belie. By his acceptance at its face value of Governor Roosevelt's estimate of his own accomplishments, Mr. Gruening gives us ample proof of the Governor's political sagacity. He has advertised his achievements so well that even Mr. Gruening has failed to see the nigger in the woodpile. In spite of all Mr. Gruening says and of all Governor Roosevelt himself says, first-hand information plus a little logic convinces me that the Governor is not even moderately popular in Porto Rico and that he has done nothing so far which will permanently alter conditions here.

His spectacular appeal for federal aid and aid from private charities has done far more to enhance his reputation in the United States than the money obtained has done to remedy the conditions he has exposed. He has left unassailed the fundamental causes of the poverty and disease he finds so alarming and has satisfied himself with providing a very temporary relief at the expense of Porto Rican pride and reserve. His flaunting of their miseries before the world has been resented by a large section of Porto Ricans who feel that they have never had a fair chance to solve their problems and fear that they will be unjustly held responsible for existing conditions.

The strongest evidence of the Governor's unpopularity is the unrest and discontent current in all phases of Porto Rican life. Anti-Americanism exists in every quarter and the Nationalist Party is showing unprecedented strength and growth. At the last elections there were scarcely 600 Nationalists, whereas today it is estimated that there are more than that many thousand, not to mention the hundreds of sympathizers who on slight provocation would catapult into the party. Granted that this may be in part a result of the depression, no person who understands Porto Rican psychology will attribute more than a small part to this cause. Porto Ricans have long been inured to privation, sacrifice, and discomfort. They lack the American's love of and need for comfortable living. Failure to understand this often causes Americans to accuse them of ingratitude, on the assumption that their content should be in direct ratio to their material well-being. I have lived in Porto Rico thirteen years and I have seen small hope for the island from any quarter. The Porto Ricans are handicapped by overpopulation, absentee ownership, and depleted initiative,

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which are, with the exception of overpopulation, the results of the colonial system under which they have always lived. Until the fundamental causes of these ills are removed, I see small hope of any change for the better.

PAULINE M. DE ROJAS

Caguas, Porto Rico, October 7

A Correction from Mr. Thomas

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In my article, A Socialist Looks at the Swope Plan, in your issue of October 7, I credited Mr. J. Stewart Baker, president of the Bank of Manhattan Trust Company, with exhorting New York bankers to stand against any and all changes in the banking laws. This was the way I read the newspaper summary of the speech which stressed his opposition to unsound and foolish changes.

Since the appearance of the article Mr. O. G. Alexander, assistant vice-president of the Manhattan Company, has sent me a copy of Mr. Baker's speech. In his speech Mr. Baker does stress the danger of what he regards as unsound laws and does play down the importance of laws and regulation. It is fair to add, however, that he also urges the bankers "to support or propose themselves those changes which they believe to be necessary and wise"—apparently changes in law. He also urges them "to use their influence individually and collectively to see that unsound and dangerous practices, no matter where they occur, are not allowed to continue."

Unfortunately, from my point of view, Mr. Baker neither explains what are the unsound proposals of which he shows so much fear nor tells us what are the sound proposals which bankers themselves should advance. In spite of this, it is fair to say that his complete speech shows that he was not so much of an obstructionist in the field of banking legislation as the newspaper summary which I saw would seem to indicate, and this fact should in justice to him be made known to your readers.

New York, October 8 NORMAN THOMAS

Escaped Convicts

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

Sir: A recent article in the New York *Herald Tribune* from Trinidad, B. W. I., made it known that the British hereafter will recognize the escaped convicts from French Guiana as being human creatures. This is the first "break" the *déportés* have ever had, as heretofore they have been universally regarded as outlaws and beasts.

The situation is that the prisoners, having been deported to a pestilential colony under conditions that leave them virtually no hope of ever returning to their fatherland and little hope of resisting for long the malignancy of the torrid jungle surroundings, are allowed to escape by officials who know that 90 per cent of those who get away will soon perish—thereby relieving the French government of their expense. A few of the refugees have in the past been mercifully permitted to remain in Dutch Guiana; a good many—during the building of the Panama Canal—worked for a while under Goethals; but the great mass was received nowhere and simply had to "push on" till waves or jungles swallowed them.

About a thousand are sent out to Cayenne from France every year, yet the prison population remains stationary—about a thousand die off, or "escape." Bounties are offered for the return of refugees, of course; but there is little traffic in this line owing to the small number that ever emerges to a port where capture might be accomplished.

I was a miner in Dutch Guiana for almost three years and afterwards put in almost two years in British Guiana. I have made many excursions into French Guiana, and have given employment to hundreds of the *déportés*. I know about the prisons, therefore, and the entire penitentiary system—as much as anyone can know who is not directly connected with it. And I think that the practice of allowing prisoners to escape so that they may rot in the jungles or drown in voyages on frail rafts and dugouts is almost as unworthy of France as is the prison system as it affects the men who cannot or do not try to escape.

East Orange, N. J., September 10 A. G. BARNETT

The Way of the Ostrich

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: A noted cosmetics company has recently issued a solemn ukase to its employees forbidding them, in the exercise of their professional duties, to employ the word "depression" and authorizing the use of the term "adjustment."

As its final contribution to the science of economics, the announcement is careful to explain that whereas in "pre-adjustment" times the unworthy bricklayer received more than the worthy professor, all that is now being changed. The resulting process of change is known as an "adjustment."

Back to Normalcy!

New York, September 30 CLIFTON FADIMAN

Bull Carrying

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

Sir: In your story in the issue of September 23 about H. E. Man of Tennessee who carries a bull on his back daily, you suggest that the athletic farmer might have known something about Greek mythology. Perhaps it is possible, too, that the author of that paragraph had read the following from Montaigne:

> Une femme de village ayant apprins de caresser et porter entre ses bras un veau dez l'heure de sa naissance, et continuant tousiours a ce faire, gaigna cela par l'accoustumance, que tout grand boeuf qu'il estoit, elle le portoit encores.

Springfield, Mass., September 27 W. G. ROGERS

Contributors to This Issue

W. P. MANGOLD is engaged in industrial research and magazine writing in New York City.

ROBERT DELL has for many years been the Paris correspondent of *The Nation* and the *Manchester Guardian*.

DAVID MORTON is the author of a book of verse entitled "Nocturnes and Autumnals."

LOUIS M. HACKER, in collaboration with Benjamin B. Kendrick, is the author of "The United States Since 1865," to be published this winter.

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WHITTLESEY HOUSE

Finance

Unused Billions in the Banks

A WEEK ago it was said in this column that only a few faint voices had been raised against the proposal to amend the Federal Reserve Act in order to admit to the rediscount privilege certain securities now excluded. Since that time the objections, though still relatively few, have gained in vigor. Senators Glass and Robinson have gone on record in opposition to unwarranted tampering with the banking system and the venerable *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* has stated its emphatic disapproval.

Meantime, even a cursory study of the current bank reports reveals some interesting facts as to the nature of the present credit emergency, which called forth the suggestion that the Federal Reserve law be liberalized. Each week a large group of banks, holding more than three-fourths of all the deposits of member banks in the Federal Reserve system, publish their condition. On October 7 these reporting banks owned $4,194,000,000 of United States government securities, on which loans can be readily obtained at the Federal Reserve. In addition, they held $7,777,000,000 of loans made to customers against security other than stocks and bonds; in this total was included a vast sum of commercial paper eligible for rediscount.

But against this enormous amount of assets on which Reserve Bank credit could be obtained, without going to the trouble of having the banking law amended, only $274,000,000 of such credit was actually outstanding. Leaving out of the reckoning the billions of miscellaneous commercial loans of these member banks, since the amount eligible for rediscount is unknown, it appears that their borrowings at the Federal Reserve in this moment of stress amount to less than 6½ per cent of the government securities owned. It is true that in some sections the ratio of borrowings is far higher. In the Philadelphia, Atlanta, and San Francisco districts, loans obtained from the Federal Reserve amount to from 14 to 23 per cent of the government securities held by the reporting banks. But even if all their Federal Reserve borrowings were secured by the pledge of United States bonds and notes, and none by commercial paper, the banks in these three districts alone would still be able to borrow more than $500,000,000 additional on government obligations now unpledged.

Now, why do not the great banks of the nation, with billions of potential credit at their command, come without more ado to the rescue of their less fortunate banking neighbors who are in trouble because their assets are "frozen"? The answer is, of course, that the big banks are ruled by a proper determination to keep their own position liquid. The whole paradoxical affair illustrates the unfortunate workings of a normally effective banking system when called upon to deal with wholly abnormal conditions. One of the salient facts in the banking history of the last half-dozen years has been the growth of a vast amount of credit—mortgage loans, stock-market loans, and the rest—outside of the commercial banking field and apparently beyond the power of the Federal Reserve to check.

Our vast influx of gold from abroad, due to post-war financial derangement and the government's policy on tariffs and debts, made this growth possible by making the banks independent of Federal Reserve control. Under normal conditions this enormous base of credit would not have been available for land booms and stock-market booms. No better explanation of the present difficulties exists than the pithy remark of the National City Bank: "It is war that is impracticable in a highly organized world."

S. Palmer Harman

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Books, Films, Drama

To One Who May Be Listening

By DAVID MORTON

Wherever you are—who are no longer here—
I send you news how goldenrod tonight
Has given a golden ending to the year
And trees are misty in the cold starlight;
And how the dusk is earlier, coming down
With smell of woodsmoke that is bitter-sweet,
And yellow windows blossom through the town,
One after one, along the darkening street.

But these are things that you have known before:
The gray sky staring through the stripped November,
Rain in the night, and leaves about the door—
It is a stranger thing, though, to remember
How, once, all this had seemed but changing weather
For two who lit their autumn fire together.

Portrait of a Uniform

Leonard Wood. **By Hermann Hagedorn. Harper and Brothers. Two volumes. $10.**

IN this exhaustive, handsomely turned-out biography Mr. Hagedorn has sought to give us a heroic portrait of General Leonard Wood; yet I am afraid he has been no more successful in his medium than John Singer Sargent, using paints and canvas, was in his. In both we find all those shining accoutrements that go with the military, that is to say, plenty of gold braid and buttons in the one and plenty of brave words in the other: Leonard Wood is the self-denying army doctor, the courageous brigade leader, the wise and humane colonial administrator, the long-suffering department commander, the cheated (but stoical) Presidential aspirant. He reaps all the honors; he knows all the great ones of the earth; when he is denied the attainment of a particular ambition—such as serving his country on the battlefield in France, or being the Republican Presidential nominee in 1920, or sitting in Harding's Cabinet as Secretary of War—it is largely because vulgar politicians, stooping to tricks of which he was incapable, are determined upon frustrating him.

Two reasons suggest themselves why the history of Leonard Wood's long life of service is bound to leave the average American cold. The one is concerned with his outstanding achievement, the other with his intention. Wood, after the war with Spain, was America's military governor of Cuba until the Platt Amendment, devised as a sort of leash on which the Cubans might be secured, released the general for other endeavors; from 1921 to his death in 1927 he was governor general of the Philippine Islands. Thus, for almost ten years—and it is the longest single record of its kind in American annals—he was the ruler over the major portions of America's overseas dominion. In both his principalities he was, as Mr. Hagedorn himself says, "an odd combination of sanitary inspector, patriarchal judge, and Harun-al-Rashid." In the Caribbean island he cleaned up Santiago and Havana, laid out a system of governmental works, and tried to keep the fists of the local politicians out of the public till; in the Pacific archipelago, he concerned himself with the welfare of the lepers, wrangled with the Filipino *políticos,* and set himself the task of destroying the experiments in self-government inaugurated under the Wilson administrations. All this was in the best tradition of Anglo-Saxon colonialism, of white man's burden, little brown brother, and the rest of that exalted and by now shopworn vocabulary.

I have said Anglo-Saxon colonialism, and not American, advisedly. To the British, Wood was the great colonial administrator, for he knew how to keep subject peoples under heel; to Americans, when they gave any thought to his work, he was an embarrassment and often a good deal of a nuisance. For colonialism has never really become a part of the American national scheme, despite all the talk of Mahan, Whitelaw Reid, Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge, and the rest of that noble company. Modern colonialism has had, at its back, two great forces to maintain and accelerate its drive—saved capital and a middle class threatened with loss of status. Saved capital had to be invested; younger and impecunious sons had to be found careers: here were the reasons for British, French, German, Dutch, and Belgian overseas adventures from the middle of the nineteenth century onward. Not so in the case of America, simply because we neither possessed capital surpluses nor wanted for opportunities within our own borders for individual aggrandizement. In our national development from an agrarian to a capitalist-imperialist economy we have really skipped the chapter of colonial expansion, and our national folklore has been spared the fanciful embellishments of a native Rudyard Kipling or Pierre Loti. On this score Wood's deeds in Cuba and the Philippines—aside from the question of their doubtful intrinsic worth—have found no counterpart in the real or vicarious experience of the average middle-class American.

The second count against Wood is of somewhat similar nature, though it centers in his intention rather than his accomplishment: he was that *rara avis* in our history, the vocal professional soldier who aspired to the role of the man on horseback. On Wood's part in the preparedness agitation of 1915 and 1916 it is hardly necessary to dilate at any great length. The argument of his friends, I suppose, would be (though his biographer scarcely thinks a defense is called for) that had America been prepared for war Germany would not have run the risk of embroiling us through the submarine threat. That this contention is of dubious validity is now generally taken for granted; our economic stake in an Allied victory, by the end of 1916, was so great and the British propaganda so successful that our involvement, sooner or later, was inevitable. That Wood, wearing the uniform of the American army and on the pay roll of his government, was flagrantly insubordinate in spending his time going up and down the land beating the drum—this despite the official policy of neutrality of his commander-in-chief, the President of the United States—is to put it mildly.

But that Wood should seek the Republican Presidential nomination in 1920 by very much the same sort of noise-making—our national security demanded "universal service" under the colors; there existed a national emergency; there was need for a "man of the hour"—this was another and more serious matter. Wood's success in 1920 (and he might have been successful had he not been over-eager) would have meant, if not the inauguration of a kind of fascism (for Mussolini was yet to make his march to Rome), certainly the raising of the military to a station never allowed them by the American people. The clanking of the sword in public places has always had something ridiculous about it for us and we have never had much use for professional warmakers in time of peace. The elevation of Wood to the Presidency—for nomination in this case carried with it election—would have marked a clean break with what has always been essentially sound American practice. We should in

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all probability have had the beginnings of a military caste in America; there is no question, too, that Mexico, Nicaragua, and Cuba would not have been safe.

Mr. Hagedorn makes no effort to hold in rein his prejudices, and his likes and dislikes are phrased in an extravagant vocabulary. Thus Long, McKinley's capable Secretary of the Navy (who distrusted his first assistant, Theodore Roosevelt), was a "pacifistic Secretary"; about Secretary of War Root (who gave Wood his head in Cuba) "there was a kind of inescapable greatness"; Steinhart, who came to Cuba in Wood's military entourage and remained to become the island's leading capitalist, was "this devoted chief clerk"; Wilson's speech was characterized by "an eloquent sophistry," an "unctuous insincerity." The year 1916 (in which took place Colonel House's secret mission to the Allies, the Sussex note as a result of which Germany was compelled to abandon unrestricted submarine warfare, Wilson's effort to end the war on the basis of a peace without victory) was "an ignoble year for the nation, a year of . . . threats and crawling, high sentiments and the fleshpots." This sort of loose talk does not help the case Mr. Hagedorn seeks to make out for General Leonard Wood.

LOUIS M. HACKER

Roman History Reinterpreted

The Life and Times of Marc Antony. By Arthur Weigall. G. P. Putnam's Sons. $5.

MR. WEIGALL knows his material so well, and obviously is himself so interested in it, that it is unnecessary for him to use tricks to interest his readers. He has become one of the most popular of modern historians without committing any of the misdemeanors of the vulgarizer.

I call him historian rather than biographer because Mr. Weigall cannot extract his Antony from the historical situation. But this is well both for the biography and the history of his subject. A historical figure is not a private person and cannot be understood isolated from his times; nor can his time be understood unless his personality is made clear enough to explain his special influence upon it. The balance between history and biography Mr. Weigall manages as effectively in this "biography" as he does in his "history" of the Pharaohs.

In fact, "The Life and Times of Marc Antony" is so much a history of the times that Cicero receives almost as much space as Antony, and as they enter the record, the Gracchi, Marius, Sulla, Caesar, Pompey, Brutus, Cato the younger, Octavian, and Cleopatra are discussed with the same weight of detail.

In his estimates of these figures Mr. Weigall feels the situation concretely enough to become a partisan, though not so excessively as to keep this from being a virtue. The heat of his interest brings an energetic warmth into his work. His defense of Catiline is perhaps a little too headlong, his exposure of Cicero a little too broad; but reason is with him. Modern research has devaluated the over-idealized republic and republicans. Where Mr. Weigall errs most, I believe, is in his estimate of Caesar. He does not give Caesar credit for what was, after all, the clearest proof of his clear vision. It was not merely a vulgar imperial ambition that made Caesar aim at a crown, but also the realization that civil war had become endemic, and that only the rise of a neutral power, kingly and superior in prestige to political parties, could save the Roman state. Mr. Weigall's view of Caesar's military campaigns is also, I believe, in error. There is no question that Caesar made mistakes, but he had the genius to retrieve them, even to make use of them.

The ease and the familiarity with which Mr. Weigall moves through this epoch are remarkable. It was an ignoble epoch in which general anarchy prepared the way for the supreme anarch, the emperor. Rome had grasped power and was corrupted by it, not, as the traditional historians assert, by Greek and Oriental civilization, which instead served to temper Roman arrogance and to refine Roman luxury. Weigall's writing makes everything clear, and brings everything close. If his conception lacks broad synthesizing powers, if his prose occasionally becomes too lively, his book is nevertheless full of well-handled information and is as readable as any I have seen on the subject.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

American Beauty Shoppe

American Beauty. By Edna Ferber. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

IMAGINE a finely designed, sturdily built New England house. There are many such in New England. Imagine the bricks neatly turned and strongly laid, the small-paned windows giving off the mauve and pale rose of old glass, the fan-light over the door a thing of delicately patterned beauty, the chimneys numerous and promising many fires within; imagine the oaks placed justly, the slope from the house covered with turf. Think of the oak sills, as firm as the day they were laid two hundred years ago, the white-oak rafters, the paneling in the great kitchen, of chestnut two feet wide; think of the brick ovens, made to receive bread laid in on an iron shovel, the cranes to swing the soup kettle on, the iron hooks for the skillets, the brass fenders, the bed-warmer for winter nights. . . . Think of such a house filled to the doors, upstairs and down, with the grossest and shiniest of Grand Rapids furniture. And weep.

It is Miss Ferber's curse that she cannot write a novel that will be read by fewer than 100,000 persons. This is not to say that a fine novel will not be read by its many thousands; it is to say that most of the novels which command large sales have in them elements of vulgarity that make them acceptable to so many different kinds of people. Miss Ferber is not the ordinary large-sale novelist. If she were, one might cheerfully lump her with the Ethel M. Dells of her generation and let her count her royalties in peace. But she is plagued by that bitter worm that will give honest writers no rest: she wants to write a great novel, about a great subject, treated greatly. If one may judge merely by what she has written in the last few years, she is furiously ambitious, and in the highest sense. Nothing less than the best will please her.

She wrote "Cimarron." It was a large canvas, the wild, sweeping, magnificent story of a conquering people. It read like a movie, and in the movies I have no doubt it fully justified its romantic plot. She has written "American Beauty." It is about New England, where grow the twisted roots of the tree that is now America. It is about the New England house that was built out of the exuberance of the early settlers, proudly taking their land from the Indians, entirely self-sustaining, filling their house with warmth and color and life and many children; and about that house when the builders and their children were seized with a decay that left them dwarfed and broken and bitter; and about that house again when new blood, new foreign blood, this time from the south of Europe instead of the north, came to reclaim those acres but to let the house die of dirt and neglect, while their children, in turn, left for the hat factories of Danbury and Waterbury. This is the stuff of which to make a novel! Miss Ferber must have known it or she would not have worked up her material with such pains. There have been many novels written about New England, none from exactly this angle. There was every reason for the success of this one. Not its material but its artistic success.

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Every reason, that is, except for Miss Ferber's curse. She was not content to let New England tell its own story, to take a house and family and let them change and decay as they have in truth done. She must needs introduce a romantic interest, a Chicago millionaire who returns to reclaim his lost acres, with a daughter—an architect, mind you!—who will not only remodel the house but marry the last survivor of the old New England family. It is all rather a pity. But it will undoubtedly sell. Even to those persons whose roots are in New England, who like a good, rousing story about their home land, and do not object to a bit of love interest thrown in.

DOROTHY VAN DOREN

Detachment Through Identity

The Five Seasons. By Phelps Putnam. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.

IN "The Five Seasons," as in Phelps Putnam's first book of poems, "Trinc," Bill Williams is the protagonist. And who is Bill Williams? Bill Williams, a hobo, an explorer of the earth and in particular of his own America, is receptive and creative Man. He is male force, clarity, discipline, and intellect—in short, power directed toward order. And Bill, the hobo, is also disparateness, loneliness, and hunger after love, after the female force. This hunger, he knows, will betray him, for it is the dream which becomes dust. Bill, like E. E. Cummings's hero, Him, is Man the social being, bound too much by his need of love and security, and Man the artist, arrogant, self-absorbed, and free. He is modern man interested in his own psychological problems and obstinately concerned, despite his intellectual acceptance of the scientific universe, with his own soul. His hell has no fires, it is the desolation of city streets; his heaven is that sudden vision of certainty, that abrupt and soon shattered announcement of unity which the god of chance, the only god Bill can acknowledge, may sometimes reveal. Bill is, in his body, identified with all natural forces; in his mind, with all spiritual search.

"The Five Seasons" is, in other words, a deeply introspective study of a man's mind. What then does the poet mean by the statement he makes in his foreword that his poems are conceived in an "objective" rather than in a personal or lyrical mood? What Mr. Putnam seems to mean by his phrase "conceived in an objective mood" is this: His subject is the mind of his hero, and he himself is separate from this subject only because he externalizes his own ideas and emotions in those of his hero. In other words, his separateness is one of technique and form only. The poet does not speak in the first person; he does not need to. Actually he is identified with the innermost reflections of his protagonist, much more exactly identified, indeed, than are many lyric poets with their subjects. So immediately at one with his hero is the poet that he need not—in the manner of the lyricist—employ the richly suggestive word or metaphor to convey his emotions. Since he communicates not through these but through himself, the bald and direct statements his hero makes need no further adornment—they are already shaped or "imaged." Poetic images he uses only when these are symbolic, not merely descriptive, of the protagonist's (and always of his own) state of mind. The mind which has conceived of both the subject and the vision and the mind stating the fusion of these "objectively" are one and the same. And thus the first step in communication—that of the fusion of subject and vision—is accomplished.

But there is always a second step: this fusion must communicate itself directly to the reader. In other words, the reader must be made to feel the same reaction as the poet in respect to the chosen subject and vision. In this particular book not only the poet but also the reader must actually become Bill Williams. How is this to be accomplished? The answer is—through a narrative technique. Phelps Putnam's invention lies in his use of a narrative technique for a purely lyric purpose. The lyric poet, as has already been said, conveys his feelings to his reader through the use of emotional words and rich imagery—through the connotations of words and the associations they arouse. The narrative poet uses the familiar fact, the established scene, the related incident, the explained character to achieve the same purpose. He identifies his reader and his hero through arousing the reader's recognition of himself in the character. It does not matter, once this identification is accomplished, whether the following action be externalized in drama or made to take place in the mind. The latter form of action has long been stressed by Joyce and his followers; Putnam makes a particular use of it in poetry.

And what are the results in Phelps Putnam's art of this "objective" method? His deliberately chosen form, that of narrative detachment, gives his themes the effect of being the specific in the universal, or simultaneously the example and the law. His poems have, moreover, a dramatic power, that of emotions externalized in action, and the impact of that action upon the mind of the reader is immediate—more immediate than it would have been had he translated his emotions into lyrics. Also, the poet's intensity has no channel of figurative language into which it may overflow and is, consequently, perfectly restrained. And the final result is that the story of Bill Williams, which is the story of the modern sophisticated and tortured mind, achieves a kind of epic significance, as of material long in the modern consciousness focused here in a familiar type of hero. As a modern hero Bill attains almost epic proportions through the passion of his inner struggle. He epitomizes the disintegrated consciousness of the modern intellectual world, not through diffuse embroideries upon the melancholy theme of chaos, but through action which is inner conflict externalized. And paradoxical though it may sound, the externalizing of the internal person makes, in this poem, for a supreme detachment which is a kind of solution. The significance of Bill Williams's search through chaos is not negative but positive; his prayer to the god Chance shows not skepticism but faith.

> Give us such eyes as will penetrate your eyes
> And lungs to draw the breath you give to us.
> . . . . . .
> We travel in the belly of the wind;
> It is you, Lord, who will make us lame or swift.

EDA LOU WALTON

Mark Twain's Pessimism

My Father, Mark Twain. By Clara Clemens. Harper and Brothers. $5.

THE life of Mark Twain is probably more fully documented than that of any other American author, and it is doubtful if there is much to be added to our knowledge of him. Certainly his daughter, though she prints a number of new letters and tells some new stories, presents no information that will involve a new conception of his character. Nor does she herself attempt anything like a consistent interpretation. Indeed, the one piece of interpretation that she does offer will scarcely hold water. Dissenting from Van Wyck Brooks's thesis, she insists that it was the death of his daughter Susy that made Mark Twain a pessimist. Unfortunately for this contention, it can be shown that however much the loss of his child may have intensified Clemens's gloom, a foundation for his philosophy had been laid long before 1896. The sardonic aphorisms used as chapter headings in "Pudd'nhead Wilson"

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(1894) are quite as bitter as anything he subsequently wrote, and a passage in "Life on the Mississippi" (1883) records his belief in the essential dishonesty of his profession. In fact, as early as 1874 the reading of Lecky had given him a hint, and the Paine biography makes it clear that within the next decade he came both to doubt the existence of a beneficent Providence and to question the uprightness of the human heart. Susy's death may have increased, but it did not originate, his pessimism.

For the rest, these reminiscences show that Clemens was not only, as has often been said, tender and lovable, but even soft and sentimental. The sophomoric cynicism of his later books was the complement to a certain whimsicality and effusiveness in his domestic relationships. His naive but ferocious heterodoxy appears to have compensated for an unmistakable tender-mindedness, a wistful desire to believe. His attack on Christian Science, for example, grew out of his own interest, not quite credulous enough to help him, in mental healing. He believed in mental telepathy, took a passing interest in spiritualism, and never outgrew certain of his boyhood superstitions. Yet the fact remains that we have seldom had in American life a figure that appeals so strongly to the imagination, and that is undoubtedly why he has been so much written about. Even Miss Clemens's book, badly arranged and full of trivialities as it is, makes interesting reading. Was it his personality, one sometimes wonders, that persuaded his contemporaries that he was a great writer? Does it still cast a spell over us, moving even those who, like Van Wyck Brooks, cannot take him quite at face value, to discover unrealized capacities that ally him to greatness?

GRANVILLE HICKS

The Sources of Philosophy

History of Greek Philosophy. Volume II: *The Sophists, Socrates, Plato.* Volume III: *Aristotle.* By B. A. G. Fuller. Henry Holt and Company. Each $3.50.

IN the hope of proving that "the history of philosophy constitutes one of the best detective stories ever written," Professor Fuller has been led to "sugar-coat the pill" with some flippant writing, occasional humor, and such unsuccessful analogies as "Philosophy, like the stock market, has its ups and downs." Professor Fuller is a highly competent scholar, and his analyses and summaries of doctrine are always accurate and occasionally felicitous; but his method of injecting interest into the material is false, remaining extraneous to the subject matter. That he failed to make the history of Greek philosophy vivid and significant is, however, not his fault alone, but that of the dominant conception of the history of philosophy.

Most of its historians and teachers view the history of philosophy much as the history of Christianity was thought of a century ago. Christian history was conceived as something apart from universal history. The rise and fall of empires, the tremendous changes resulting from the rise of new economics and new classes, new techniques and new sciences—these factors were considered as not, somehow, interfering with the "essence" of Christianity. Their influence was asserted to be, at most, peripheral. Gradually, however, the more obvious causal relations existing between the church and other institutions were admitted. Then came the socio-economic interpretation of history and its application to the church, a method which by now has gained general acceptance among historians. Philosophy, however, is still studied as if it were a divine institution, a detached tradition whose history is a thing apart. The consequence of this approach has been to convince both the university student and the general reader that philosophy has nothing to do with the world around him, so that one of the most important fields for the understanding of civilization and, moreover, one of the most important social instruments, is more neglected than the latest fabricated division of the social sciences.

The traditional conception of the history of philosophy as simply an affiliation of philosophical systems, with new ideologies arising primarily as reactions to those preceding, is sterile, explaining almost nothing. When Professor Fuller tells us, for example, that the "decisive factors" of the rise of the Sophists "lurked in weaknesses half-hidden in the foundations of the older systems," he is assuming a causal relation which is hardly as significant as the relation of the Sophists to the unstable economic and social conditions of the Greece of their day. And this method falls down completely when he is confronted by the opposition between Cynic and Cyrenaic, both claiming to derive from Socrates. Only a sociological approach can show how Cynicism, that bitter philosophy of a group of outsiders, and Cyrenaism, the serene philosophy of a leisure class, could both claim to interpret the same master. Similarly, only a sociological approach can explain the cycle in philosophy of constructive synthesis and skeptical criticism which for Professor Fuller remains a mystery. Synthesis is the mark of an era of economic stability; the clearest examples are the medieval synthesis of the thirteenth century and the Hegelian synthesis of the first decades of the nineteenth century. Skepticism always accompanies an era of economic expansions and instability, such as the period of bourgeois rise to power, from the Revolution of 1688 to the French Revolution. This epoch saw the rise of the skeptical philosophies of Locke, who was the conscious apologist of the Revolution of 1688; of Hume, one of whose mainsprings was hostility to the feudalistic established church; and of Kant, of whose work Heine could say: "The German revolution will not prove any milder or gentler because it was preceded by the 'Critique' of Kant. . . . These doctrines served to develop revolutionary forces that only await their time. . . ." These philosophies can no more be explained by the conception of the history of philosophy as an affiliation of philosophical systems than can the growth in our own day of the philosophies of pragmatism and dialectical materialism.

Yet, though the sociological method of studying the history of philosophy is obviously fruitful, almost nothing has as yet been done with it. That the method has not been widely utilized is, however, understandable, for it has revolutionary implications. The sociological explanation of cycles in philosophy is ultimately as subversive as the sociological explanation of economic cycles. And, indeed, before academic writers like Professor Fuller can understand philosophical cycles they will have to understand economic cycles. But if Professor Fuller really wants to prove that "the history of philosophy constitutes one of the best detective stories ever written," the sociological approach will give him clues sufficient for a lifetime of research—if he is not afraid of the heretical conclusions he may reach.

FELIX MORROW

Books in Brief

Mexicana: A Book of Pictures. By René d'Harnoncourt. Alfred A. Knopf. $3.50.

Mexico is now the vogue. It supplies the "escape" for those who have the fare or the flivver to "get away from it all." Hence the increasing literary output concerning the fancied Elysium, Utopia, paradise, at our back door. Among the various excellent and mediocre descriptions and transcriptions of this newly discovered neighboring Nirvana, none surpasses the thin near-quarto volume entitled "Mexicana: A Book of Pictures," by René d'Harnoncourt. (Count d'Harnoncourt is known for his assembling of the superb collection of Mexican

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arts and crafts which has recently been the rounds of our major museums.) Where hitherto our interpretations of Mexico have been chiefly verbal, even though often well illustrated, here is a combination of pictorial and literary, with the emphasis almost wholly on the former—the more truly Mexican method of expression. Less stylistic than Diego Rivera's, less caricature than José Clemente Orozco's, less bizarre than the products of the plastic school of contemporary Mexican draftsmanship, these pencil drawings are as true and savory as the originals they have captured. Here is Mexico—as it is—portrayed with penetrating accuracy and with a combination of deep sympathy and occasional tender irony which is in itself the embodiment of the Mexican *vacilada*—the constant paradox of closely associated opposites. No collection of either the literature or the art of Mexico is complete or even adequate without these eloquent depictions. Museums will compete for the originals.

The Problems of Evolution. By Arthur Ward Lindsey. The Macmillan Company. $2.75.

Evolutionists are engaged in stock-taking. After three decades under the harsh rule of Weismannian heredity, they have rediscovered the environment, not as a control, but as a cause of change. Under new names the doctrines of Buffon have reappeared. Professor Lindsey attempts to evaluate these changes, and to chart a course for further speculation. In the main, he keeps to familiar theories, which he believes are competent to meet the situation. But not singly: if they are to function in a complex, synthetic nature the theories themselves must unite and interact. Whether one agrees with the union proposed or not, the main contention seems thoroughly valid, and the attendant criticisms are sound. From them one gets a fair and modern summary of changing viewpoints in evolution.

Joseph Priestley. By Anne Holt. With an Introduction by Francis W. Hirst. Oxford University Press. $3.50.

Nonconformist preacher, teacher, scientist, metaphysician, and polemist for freedom, Joseph Priestley was one of those versatile figures which are not encountered in history after the eighteenth century. Partly on account of his versatility, and still more on account of the change in intellectual fashions, which have moved away from theological preoccupations, fame has dealt hardly with him. In his lifetime Priestley was the friend and correspondent of the most important intellectual leaders on both sides of the ocean, and his name was everywhere a household word. Today he is remembered only as the discoverer of oxygen and the inventor of soda water. Miss Holt, in her painstaking and charmingly written Life, has given a good picture of Priestley's many-sided career and its place in the intellectual and spiritual history of the period of the two revolutions. The biography is all the more valuable since few would be tempted to consult Priestley's original writings.

Peacocks on Parade. By Albert Stevens Crockett. Sears Publishing Company. $3.50.

There were peacocks in those days—as well as giants. They were often one and the same person. For despite copybook philosophy, those whom we accept as the great figures of the world are not invariably modest. A depressingly—or entertainingly—high percentage are strutters, nor are they necessarily stuffed shirts on that account. Mr. Crockett picks the two decades 1890-1910 as "the age of strut." Possibly twenty years hence somebody may apply the same description to the period from 1910 to 1930—with equal accuracy. But it is true that the Chicago exposition of 1893 revealed Americans to themselves for the first time as successful and wealthy, and for some years thereafter they displayed the usual gaucheries of the newly rich a little more blatantly than before or since. Mr. Crockett, who was intimately associated with the old Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, takes its famous Peacock Alley as the background of his reminiscences, which are a potpourri of brief biographies and backstairs gossip. The book lacks the underlying philosophy of "The Mauve Decade" and the historical continuity of "Old Bowery Days," but offers some entertaining reading and records Americana which otherwise might be lost.

Albert Grope. By F. O. Mann. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

This five-hundred-page story of a man who rises from poverty to business success, and love, is dull, tedious, overwritten, over-long, and full of caricatures that are repetitious, imitative, and for the most part pointless. It is full of what is supposed to be "gentle satire" on the young man of no background who has aspirations to shine socially. Unfortunately the method and results are meaningless. If this sort of thing continues to be written and published, it bodes no good for the novel.

The Sons of Mrs. Aab. By Sarah Gertrude Millin. Horace Liveright. $2.50.

Once again Sarah Gertrude Millin writes of South Africa, and draws out to novel length a story of external misfortunes which, compressed into a briefer form, could have been effective and in its way moving, for the characters have some dreary breath of life in them and distinctness from one another. The story of Fanny, which has a connection of accident only with the story of Gideon Aab, would by itself have been a pathetic, moving piece; it loses its effect as only another misfortune in the novel's progress. The end comes so pat, so like the happy ending of less worthy novels, that it takes away from what distinction the book has attained by the competent writing throughout.

The Champion from Far Away. By Ben Hecht. Covici-Friede. $2.50.

Of the slapdash, somewhat cheaply written short stories in this volume, the most distinguished in treatment and manner is The Masquerade, one of the four brief stories whose scene is the death-house of a prison. No one of the stories is of first rank or even second; aside from The Masquerade, and possibly Linder the Great and The Wistful Blackguard, they are trite in subject matter, and when not trite they lack fulness and richness. Baby Milly and the Pharaoh, the longest story, is so heavily done, so overreaching in its satiric and humorous purposes, that it comes to resemble the very object it is trying to poke fun at. In fact, the fault of the volume as a whole seems to be a general ineffective sprawling.

A Night of Death. By Marie Bregendahl. Translated from the Danish by Margery Blanchard. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.

Strictly observing the unities of time and place, the author has given this brief novel the movement and the mood of a lyric tragedy. The locale is Broholm Farm and the action covers twelve hours of a summer night in the late seventies. Anne Gram, mother of eight and about to go through the ordeal of parturition again, takes to her bed and sends her children to their grandmother's croft nearby. Only Hans, Helga, and Lisa, ranging from nine to twelve, realize the significance of the perturbation that spreads among the servants as the night advances. In the dark hour before dawn Anne passes away. The feeling of suspense and anxiety as the interminable hours drag by is conveyed through the impressions of the watching and listening children. Pathos and a gentle humor are used with artistic finesse, and the story strikes the emotions with the direct impact of simplicity.

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BOOKS chosen for The Nation readers

Immortal Sidney

By EMMA MARSHALL DENKINGER

Miss Denkinger has selected Sir Philip Sidney as a central figure of the early Renaissance in England, and in a dramatic and picturesque style has built up around his charming character and extraordinary experiences a picture of 16th century England. $3.75

European Dictatorships

By COUNT CARLO SFORZA

Foreword by Col. Edward M. House

Count Sforza, brilliant European statesman and writer, here presents a powerful indictment of the various contemporary dictatorships abroad, including those in Italy, Russia, Poland, Jugo-Slavia, Germany, Hungary and Turkey. $3.00

Letters of Napoleon to Josephine

Preface by DR. LEON CERF

Translated by Henry W. Bunn

Here is a distinctive addition to Napoleona. For the first time the complete collection of Napoleon's letters to Josephine are published in one volume. $3.50

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The Interpretation of Development and Heredity. By E. S. Russell. Oxford University Press. $5.

The science of genetics has erected an imposing structure upon the theory that all inheritance is rigidly particulate. That theory, and its implications, have been widely accepted by sociologists, psychologists, and even legislators. Dr. Russell contends that it is false: a mere variation of preformation, without either experimental proof or logical necessity. His criticism is a beautiful piece of argument and analysis, as is also his survey of possible alternatives. Dr. Russell would lead us back to Aristotle, and thence to a theory of heredity purely physiologic. Even if his "organismic viewpoint" proves untenable, his criticisms should give pause to those evangelists of genetics who seek to "bring sound science" into sociology.

Folkways in Thomas Hardy. By Ruth A. Firor. University of Pennsylvania Press. $3.

Miss Firor, by bringing together all of the evidence that Hardy was saturated in the popular lore of his native county, not only clarifies our image of him as an artist but in a sense builds a new man for criticism henceforth to deal with. A man and a method merged in his novels and poems, and merged with a success exceedingly rare in the history of literature. Further studies will be made of Hardy, but all of them will have to take account of Miss Firor's distinguished contribution.

Films

What the Movies Do Best

TWO performances last week illustrated the sort of thing at which the movies are supreme: one was the joke picture, in which, in this case, the Four Marxes ("Monkey Business," Rivoli) disported themselves to the delight of large audiences; the other was the German panorama film, "Melody of the World" (Tobis-Vanderbilt), offered as an extra feature on the program of Camilla Horn in "Die Grosse Sehnsucht." The Marxes need little comment and certainly no introduction—one would not, for example, ask concerning them Groucho's famous question of Harpo: "I wonder if I could buy back my introduction to you?" They are generous with their talents, dashing on and off the screen with abandon and a large amount of eclat. The talkie aids them by making all their jokes audible to everybody, by presenting Harpo at the harp and either Chico or Zeppo at the piano in plain sight of the whole audience, and the screen view of their hands, faces, legs, hair, and mustaches disappoints no one. In other words, for a dollar every spectator in a very large motion-picture house can see and hear what could only be seen and heard in the legitimate theater by those fortunate persons able to sit not farther back than the tenth row center at whatever cost an ambitious manager decreed, but certainly not less than four times the film price. Let the four Marxes appear forever in the films, therefore, and justify not only their own existence but that of the audition and screen machinery.

"Melody of the World," shown for the first time in this country, but already presented in Germany and other parts of Europe, is a German film that presents the world to the audience in an unforgettable way. It has almost no logical sequence, yet one series of pictures fades into another without awkwardness. It shows every country of the earth, every people, eating, fighting, dancing, making love; it utilizes sound to reproduce the far-away echo of a train, the ear-splitting whistle of a departing liner, the screech of a saw, the clash of sword on sword, the roar of cannon, and Mr. Bernard Shaw introducing himself

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to a man from whom he is inquiring the way. In its long sequences elephants rise lumbering from the mud, Siamese dancers perform their careful and intricate steps, traffic policemen in Berlin jerk cars this way and that, and the pistons of a liner rise and fall. If this sounds merely a hodge-podge, it is far more; the audience which watched with almost desperate calm the performance of Germany's leading actors in "Die Grosse Sehnsucht"—a movie about a movie that manages to include most of the movie banalities—was urged to the edge of its chairs and to delighted applause by this cross-section of peoples and places. It is the sort of thing that can be done by the films alone; when it is done well it is far more satisfactory than the run of feature films, however well heralded.

It is worth while to return to the Marx brothers to point out that there is particularly in Groucho's humor more than a touch of Lewis Carroll. When the customs officer tells Groucho that the picture of Maurice Chevalier, whose passport he is offering for his own, does not look like him, Groucho replies: "It doesn't look like you either." When a protesting lady insists, after "treatment" of the most strenuous sort by Groucho and Harpo, "But I'm not the patient!" Groucho replies cheerfully: "That's all right; I'm not the doctor." This kind of zanyishness is more than merely snappy repartee; it has its roots in a deep-seated illogic that is logic turned around. It is more than irrelevance, it is far more than nonsense. The March Hare, when scolded by the Mad Hatter for having put butter in his watch, says wistfully: "But it was the best butter." This is the precise accent of Groucho motioning a crowd to draw nearer as, in the role of a doctor attending a man who has fainted, he cries: "Do you mind crowding closer so he won't recover?"

DOROTHY VAN DOREN

Drama

From the Attic

IT is several years now since the interest in American antiques first spread to the theater. "Fashion" led the way and then Mr. Morley's trans-Hudson group did its best to vulgarize a charming discovery. But the mode is not dead and anyone who will betake himself to "The Streets of New York," now current at the Forty-eighth Street Theater, will be rewarded with an evening as pleasant as any which the Broadway of the moment can afford.

Boucicault's old melodrama, with its stony-hearted villain and its languishing heroine, is funny of course. In it there is plot enough for a dozen modern plays and more noble sentiments than a realist could find place for in a lifetime of writing. But it is not, for all that, merely ridiculous; it is also as charming as a print from the shop of Currier and Ives, and only a very stupid person could fail to be touched by its genuine naivete. Romney Brent, as the romantic scamp, achieves a florid grace of gesture delightful to contemplate, and Dorothy Gish—to mention only one other member of a splendid company—minces through her role with a decorous coquetry whose effectiveness any hard-boiled virgin should ponder twice before despising.

The theater, say some, is dying of self-consciousness, and "The Streets of New York" almost persuades a rationalist to break his sword. In that age of innocence playwrights dared to be ridiculous and no one hesitated a moment before sacrificing probability to effectiveness. What if it is unlikely that the three principal characters should meet quite by accident upon a snowy night on Broadway, or that the villain should come to transact his nefarious business in a hovel next door

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to the humble home of the heroine? It is pleasant that the three do meet, pleasant that the villain should be overheard, and that is all that counts. Once the thing had got under way, audience and actors could proclaim together—like Mr. Chesterton's Shakespeare—"We're beyond sense now," and they could take full advantage of the fact. The result may not be true and it may not be important, but it is most extraordinary good fun.

The present revival is the best of its kind largely because its director, Lawrence Langner, and the company which he gathered around him consented to respect the play they undertook to produce. Resisting every temptation to win a too easy laugh at the expense of their script, they subordinate burlesque to re-creation and manage to give us something not so very different from what the audience of the period got: neat complications, pleasant surprises, and simple sentiments; a heroine whose innocent sufferings richly deserve the young man she wins and a villain who gets it in the neck in a clean and adequate fashion. A later age has preferred the dubious satisfaction to be obtained from the contemplation of "those discords which can never be resolved," but Boucicault's public preferred those which could; there is no denying the simple pleasure to be had from living for an hour in a world where right is right and where things both could and do turn out as they should. Even modern playwrights are well aware of the fact, and it is merely their misfortune that they, like the rest of us, no longer know where this pleasure is to be found.

Perhaps our grandfathers did not believe in it much more than we but they had the trick of a more ready "poetic faith," and Mr. Langner's company, substituting conscious art for simplicity, helps us to get that faith back by a devious route. "This play," it says, "is old. We know that it is ridiculous and we know that you know that it is, so you may mingle derision with your applause and no one will suspect you of being shamefully ingenuous. But once your self-consciousness has been set at rest, you can take our play for what it is—a pleasant tale of honest hearts, one black villain, and the rough course of a true love which is destined to run smooth at last when 'an honest maiden places her hand in the hand of a true man.'"

Virtue—if only you can decide what it is—is still the most impressive and the most engaging spectacle which art can present. Even the cynic likes to see justice and goodness and purity prevail—though "even" is, on second thought, the wrong adverb to choose. For who should admire these things more than he who knows how rare they are and how seldom they triumph? Go to "The Streets of New York" and you will find him applauding with generous enthusiasm.

From Boucicault to Strindberg is a long, rough road, but only one physical block away Robert Loraine, Dorothy Dix, and Haidee Wright are giving (at the Forty-ninth Street Theater) as impressive a performance as one is likely to see of Strindberg's pathological tragedy "The Father." No one would be likely to call that play "good fun" and I, personally, should hesitate to describe it as conspicuously "true to life," but no modern ever wrote dialogue more terribly cogent, and the insanely lucid drama makes its point with all the maddening, inescapable logic of a monomania. Certainly a scene could hardly be more terrible than that in which the poor woman-ridden victim is cajoled into a strait-jacket by a Judas kiss from his old nurse, and perhaps there is a kind of cunning in Mr. Loraine's choice of a sickish playlet by Barrie to serve as curtain-raiser. After it—if ever—one is receptive to the suggestion that women are devils.

As for "A Church Mouse" (Playhouse), it is a rather uninspired little comedy from the Hungarian enlivened by the presence of Ruth Gordon, who is, as always, delightful.

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Church and State in Spain

By I. M. LEVY

[*On October 15 the Spanish Assembly approved Article 25 of the new constitution, which guarantees "liberty of conscience and the right to practice any religion compatible with public morals." During the debates on the question the uncompromising proposal to seize all church property, referred to by Mr. Levy, was rejected, and a proposal to confiscate only the property of church organizations that take a vow of obedience directly to the Pope was passed. This refers to the Jesuits, who will also, under the new article, suffer expulsion. President Zamora, a moderate in the debate and a strong Catholic, resigned and was replaced immediately by General Manuel Azana, who retained also his former post as Minister of War. The attitude of Rome in the matter is so far uncertain; the Papal Nuncio will remain in Madrid for a time, and the church expresses itself as "wounded but not hostile to the republic." Meanwhile revolt in the Catholic Basque provinces is feared because of the action which has been taken.*—EDITOR THE NATION.]

Madrid, September 12

IN the discussion of the new Spanish constitution, the position of church and state plays a supremely important part. Article 3, which declares the absence of a state religion, and Article 25, which guarantees liberty of conscience, met with little opposition. But the twenty-fourth article, affirming the intention of the state to dissolve all religious orders and nationalize their goods, has plunged the country into the most violent controversy of years. The measure is a reaction to the abuses of the church in Spain under the monarchy, and is declared by its proponents to be a purely defensive one, but to the clergy and its adherents, who comprise practically the entire female population, it is nothing less than the means of plunging the country into the darkness of atheism and the brimstone of hell. Undoubtedly it is an unduly harsh measure, considering the manner in which organizations of every other description are favored and protected, and if the moderates in the Cortes can sufficiently assuage the wrath of their more fiery brethren, some means will be evolved whereby religious bodies may exist in complete liberty, and at the same time be removed from the possibility of encroaching upon the political functioning of the state. It is a serious problem for Spain, for the tradition of centuries is opposed to the spirit of the twentieth century; and if the matter is to end in anything short of civil war, compromises must be freely made by all concerned. The possibility of compromise at the present moment seems remote, with emotion rather than reason influencing the nation.

That the project of the new Spanish constitution was drawn up, ready for presentation to the Cortes, within a mere twenty days need arouse no doubt as to its worth. For a nation which has seen six different constitutions in a period of less than seventy years, from 1808 to 1876, the framing of another presented little difficulty, even when the popular demand for a speedy transition to parliamentary government reduced deliberation to a minimum. True, it is not perfect by any means. It shows the hastiness of its composition. It savors strongly of compromise. In its conciliatory spirit, it concedes too much to the old order to please the radicals, the extremists of whom classify it as downright reactionary, and in the eyes of the conservatives it is little short of blasphemous. Yet as a plan of moderate government, adapted to existing conditions in Spain but sufficiently advanced to fit the probable needs of the future, it does credit to itself and to its authors.

It was the intention of the Constitutional Commission to achieve a more equal balance of power between executive and legislature than is the case in most countries today. Thus, the President has no absolute veto power with reference to the acts of the Cortes, nor may he dissolve that body without resorting to a referendum. On the other hand, the Cortes may not place too many impediments in the path of the executive or his ministers, since votes of censure are made extremely difficult to pass, and the demission of the government depends, too, on a plebiscite. Hasty action in this respect on the part of the Cortes is suicidal, for its automatic dissolution follows upon a result favorable to the administrative section. The Spaniard's almost innate fear of military or clerical domination is evident in Article 68, which renders all individuals belonging to the armed forces of the nation, whether active or in reserve, all clerics, ministers, and professed religionists, and all members of royal houses, ineligible for election to the presidency, while Article 52 imposes a similar restriction on non-retired military with reference to Parliament. A similar fear of dictatorship is seen in Articles 40, 78, and 79, which give the executive power to institute decree government, in cases of national emergency, for a maximum of thirty days, subject to the convening and approval of Parliament within nine days of the suspension of the normal legislative processes. When in session the Cortes is empowered by Article 60 to authorize the government to legislate by decree, but such authorization must be renewed for each decree, and may be revoked at will. In the interim when Parliament is adjourned, a Permanent Parliamentary Commission, composed of twenty-one members drawn on a proportional basis from the political factions constituting the Cortes, is endowed with all the powers of that body in passing upon the suspension of constitutional guaranties and the inception of decree government. Senate there is none, the feeling being that an upper house is but an unnecessary survival of times past, but in its place, provided by Articles 92, 93, and 94, is a commission of technical experts to advise government and congress as to proposed laws, change and amend such laws as are submitted to it by the administration, and even, on the invitation of the government, draw up laws in their entirety. Legislative power, in the sense of actually giving force to a proposed law, is denied this body.

Thus far the project runs true to type. But in Article 6 it begins to display its individuality. Article 6 is nothing less than the Kellogg Peace Pact incorporated as an integral part of the fundamental law of the land. It reads: "Spain solemnly renounces war as an instrument of national policy."

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Articles 7 and 64 reaffirm this intention by indicating the adherence of the state to the norms of international law and the inclusion in the constitution of all international covenants deposited with the League of Nations and ratified by Spain, while Article 76 forbids the President to sign any declaration of war unless justly foreseen and permitted by international covenant, and then only when all attempts at arbitration and conciliation have been exhausted and the nation at large, by referendum, has declared its support of the declaration. To complete this humane and enlightened foreign policy at home, the Spanish state renounces all bloodshed within its territorial limits by abolishing the death penalty as part of the civil code. In spite of the heated debates which have enveloped the rest of the project, there has been almost unanimous acceptance of the sections dealing with war and capital punishment. Whatever discussion these articles have given rise to was in their praise.

A sharp thorn in the republic's side, however, is the matter of regional autonomy. Catalonia, Vasconia, Galicia, and possibly Andalusia and Valencia have aspirations in this direction. Granting these regions a certain measure of independence would not be too difficult, but the obstacle lies in the fact that they "wish to enjoy all the benefits of small nations without suffering the disadvantages," that is, acquire as great a degree of economic and political independence as possible while leaving to the state the problem of providing for administration, national defense, and the like. In short, the regions would like to contribute as little as possible to the national structure while extracting all that can be extracted from it. In this respect there is sharp conflict between the constitutional project and the regional statute presented to the Cortes by Barcelona. Articles 11 and 12 provide for regional autonomy for provinces of "definite cultural, historic, or economic affinities," if the majority of municipal governments in the region approve such a step, or if two-thirds of the electors of the region approve, the project having been submitted in plebiscite. The statute, if so approved, is submitted to the Cortes for approval, which is to be accorded always where there is no conflict with the national law. If the plebiscite produces a result negative to autonomy, five years must pass before further steps to achieve it may be taken. Article 13 aims to protect the state by forbidding any sort of federation on the part of the autonomous regions, and Article 18 gives the state the power to fix the nature of the administrative unit where the original proposal involves a conflict between local and general interests. Finally, Article 20, in no uncertain terms, asserts the supremacy of the state over the region in any and all circumstances.

Article 41 likewise presents a bone of contention. For the first time in its history Spain is to have a divorce law, and the mere thought of so diabolic an idea is sufficient to send a goodly part of the population scurrying to the protection of the countless churches which decorate the land. Formerly matrimonial dissension might end in a separation, but the right to remarry was unconditionally withheld. The constitution provides in Article 41 for complete divorce on the basis of mutual dissension, the free will of the wife, or the petition, on the allegation of just cause, of the husband. Aside from the misgivings of the faithful at this trifling with the Divine Will, there is opposition to the article in its present form, even from those who sympathize

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with a liberal divorce law, because it unduly favors the wife, while still others are of the opinion that a divorce law belongs rather to the statutes than to the constitution. And naturally, to young couples who never intend to make use of it, it is an unnecessary waste of time and space to bother writing such an article. Interesting is the fact that illegitimate children are to enjoy rights equal to those born in wedlock.

In Articles 42, 44, and 45 the project demonstrates its socialistic spirit. Article 42 asserts the title of the state to all natural wealth in the name of the nation, and while recognizing for the moment private property on the basis of the useful function exercised by the proprietor, affirms the intention of gradual socialization and the desirability of nationalizing all public utilities in the shortest possible time. The recognition of private property, for the time being, is a concession to the bourgeoisie, but the tendency toward socialization is most representative of the spirit of Spain today. Already a step in this direction has been taken in a decree ordering the cultivation of all land formerly used for private recreative purposes, which in one case constituted the half of an entire province, under penalty of confiscation. And the exigencies of the long-standing agrarian problem may make further change not so "gradual" as planned. Article 45 merely modifies the preceding in subordinating all the wealth of the nation, regardless of owner, to the interests of national economy.

Article 44 places upon the shoulders of the republic the task of providing for every individual "the necessary conditions of a dignified existence." It goes on to outline briefly the social legislation contemplated, which is concerned with accident insurance, unemployment, old age, sickness and death, child and female labor, maternity, working period and minimum wage, paid annual vacations, cooperative institutions, the economic-juridical relations of the factors controlling production, the participation of the worker in "the direction, administration, and profits of enterprises," and "all that relates to the defense of the worker."

But perhaps the most advanced proposal of the project is contained in Article 22. This article, when the amendment proposed by the young deputy, Manuel Ruiz de Villa, has been inserted, as it assuredly will be, will read as follows:

> On the basis of an effective international reciprocity . . . citizenship is conceded to the nationals of Portugal and South America, including Brazil, residing in the national territory who so desire, without their losing or changing the citizenship of their origin. This plural citizenship will have varying degrees, depending upon the status of the applicant, and will range from the simple, active vote in municipal affairs to eligibility for public office, barring that of president or minister.

The effect of so startling a proposal, amounting to a proposal of the federation of Spain and the South American states, when coupled with the anti-war legislation proposed by the constitutional project, will be felt, it is hoped, in other regions as well. The last barrier to a union of the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking peoples was swept away with the monarchy. Ethnological and cultural circumstances make such a union comparatively easy, but in the eyes of its framers the proposal merely paves the way for a broader union of all peoples, irrespective of language and the sentimental bonds of the past.

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